

THE
London Christian Instructor,
OR
CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.

No. 7.]

JULY, 1818.

[VOL. I.

BIOGRAPHY.

Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Griffiths, late Pastor of the Independent Church at Aston, Berks.

BIOGRAPHY is a department of history peculiarly engaging, and when the character of its subject is worthy of emulation, it becomes no less profitable than interesting. Those scenes in which eminently pious or useful men were the chief actors, become strongly impressive when renewed by the power of imagination; especially as our convictions assure us, that how vivid soever the scene be, it is but the picture of that which did exist, but can be realized no more. In this view, the biographical notices of christian ministers, exhibited by periodical publications, appear at once pleasing, solemn, and instructive; they attract by the charm of novelty; they excite a melancholy feeling by the recollection that the subjects of the narrative are departed hence to return no more; and they exercise a beneficial moral influence, by displaying before us the conduct, principles, and habits, of those whom as examples to the flock of Christ, we are called to follow, until, like them, through faith and patience, we inherit the promises. We contemplate another important end in exhibiting the biography of the departed ministers of Christ, in the occasion it furnishes to the churches to intreat the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth more labourers into his harvest.

CONG. MAG. NO. 7.

Of late, many excellent men have been called to their eternal reward, and their vacant stations give us occasion to say, in the language of our Lord, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few." We have now to present to the view of our readers a man of faith and patience, who, like Enoch, walked with God, and is now entered into his rest.

Joseph Griffiths, of whom we proceed to give a brief memoir, was born at Coventry, in the year 1757. In his case, as in that of many eminent christian ministers, little information of his youthful days can be gleaned. He lost that *invaluable blessing, a mother*, so early as to have no distinct recollection of having ever seen her, though he thought one scene of these infant days afforded him the power of restoring her image in his imagination. Some time after this great bereavement, his father removed from Coventry, to settle in his native country, Wales. The parental habitation was there rendered very uncomfortable by his father's second marriage, and after submitting to many inconveniences originating in that domestic change, he quitted his father's house for Coventry, where a maternal uncle resided, and at length proceeded to London. At this period he was ignorant of God, and careless about his own eternal welfare. He continued to reside in London several years, but how he

338 Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Griffiths, of Aston, Berks. [JULY,
was occupied is not known. His removal to the metropolis was the means ordained by unerring wisdom, for bringing him to an acquaintance with the only Saviour of men; and he ever afterwards looked back with peculiar satisfaction on the conduct of divine providence in rendering a change at first so inauspicious, the means of conferring the greatest of all blessings. Having on one occasion, in a merely casual way, turned in to hear the Rev. Mr. Maxfield, of London, preach, his attention was arrested, and the word of God came with irresistible demonstration to his mind.

From that time, new views and principles occupied his thoughts, and conviction of sin produced deep concern about his eternal state. Under the influence of many anxious feelings, and alarming apprehensions, he continued to attend the ministry which had been rendered effectual in dispelling his moral darkness, and showing him his need of a Saviour. It appears that his mind continued under the dominion of fear, and the spirit of bondage, some considerable time; but at length, under the same ministry which had been blessed of God first to awaken him, he was brought into the liberty of the sons of God: the distressful sense of his guilt gave place to the joys of salvation, and his spirit exulted in God his Redeemer. He has often been heard to say that the association of every circumstance connected with that season was so strong, that the very spot in the gallery could never be forgotten where he sat when the message of salvation reached him, bringing "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness;" and that even in the retrospect of many years, the abundant consolation he enjoyed

on that occasion, was highly reviving to his soul.

After long absence from his father's house, he formed the resolution of returning home; but here a new scene of difficulty opened to his view: God had done great things for him, and he felt the sacred obligation of adhering steadfastly to his principles, what opposition soever might be presented by his parent. Fully acknowledging the duty of honouring his father, he still felt that he had a father in heaven, for whose sake he ought to be willing to forego the privileges of an earthly parent's habitation. He returned, therefore, to his father, desiring to find rest under the parental roof, but with the determination rather again to leave home than violate his conscience. His father was strongly attached to what he called his church, because by law established; and the prejudice thus cherished was expressed in some instances to his son Joseph, in a way that he had previously anticipated, and which gave him occasion to avow that if he were not suffered to live unmolested, on account of his religious principles, he must again quit his father's house. This produced the desired effect, and he was permitted to choose his own society, and worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.

About this time his father, who still seemed averse to every thing puritanical, had a dream, which much impressed his mind, and which, probably, was intended of God, like the vision to Laban, when he pursued Jacob with the design of hindering him in his way, to deter from opposition, and facilitate the further purposes of divine providence. Mr. Griffiths dreamed that a lady of title and high consideration came to him, and informed him that she

wanted preachers, inquiring whether he could point out any; to which he replied by telling her, that he had a son named Joseph, who he thought would suit her. It does not appear that Mr. Joseph Griffiths had at that time any direct intention of going into the ministry, much less of entering Lady Huntingdon's college. On his return from London he had carefully sought out some pious persons with whom he could commune upon spiritual subjects. At first he could find but two or three in those parts of the mountains contiguous to his father's residence, but he afterwards became acquainted with a few more, who were "partakers of like precious faith;" and these, like some commended by the words of inspiration, "feared the Lord, and spake often one to another." At one time being in a poor cottage with several other persons waiting for a minister who was to address them that evening, when they began to despair of the minister's coming, the tenant of the cottage accosted Mr. Griffiths, who was sitting upon a stool in a corner of the room, and, greatly to his surprise, intreated him to rise and speak a few words for the edification of the people. The preacher, however, coming in soon after, rendered an address from Mr. Griffiths unnecessary. It appears from some other circumstances connected with the same period of his history, that the good man of the house was induced to make such an application, not from an injudicious enthusiastic supposition that any one is qualified to stand up before his fellow creatures, and instruct them in the most important of all subjects, the great method of salvation set forth in the gospel, but from a knowledge of the general character, habits, and talents, of the individual to whom he addressed himself. One circum-

stance connected with this period of his history we cannot omit to notice, as it tends to encourage those, who, in their early attempts to point their fellow sinners to the Saviour, may have failed to acquit themselves to their own satisfaction, and be ready to abandon a work for which they may be both intended and qualified. Mr. Griffiths on one occasion when addressing a few persons, became so embarrassed, as at length to be totally unable to proceed; in consequence of which he took his hat, and left the assembly greatly mortified: and such was the impression of that painful season upon his mind, that he frequently remarked even in his latter years, that he could never afterwards gain courage to preach from the passage which gave occasion to his embarrassment. Mentioning this failure of his early years long afterwards to a particular friend in the ministry, who was acknowledged to be very ready in his address, that friend seemed rather to jest at our worthy brother for not finding something to say; but to humble the pride and self-sufficiency of man, the same person shortly after addressing a large congregation at Bristol, totally lost the thread of discourse, and became so embarrassed, that his situation was evident to all present; and although to use his own words he found something to say, his situation was such as to occasion him yet more severe mortification than his more humble and modest brother experienced, who could find no words to proceed. Such incidents in ministerial history teach us that our dependance should ever be upon the promised grace of him who said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

It appears, that during the time he spent at home, his general character had been circulated

through that part of Wales, and his talents for the ministry could no longer be hid. The dream of his father was now in process of fulfilment. One day, greatly to the surprise of old Mr. Griffiths, and no less so to that of his son, an elderly minister who had lost his sight, and with whom they were unacquainted, called at the house, and inquiring for Joseph Griffiths, asked him whether he were disposed to go to Lady Huntingdon's College at Trevecca. Surprised at the proposal, and entertaining at that time no positive intention of engaging in the christian ministry, he replied, that he should like to make a journey, and see the country and college, fully expecting, when he had satisfied his curiosity, to return home. He accordingly took his journey, and being introduced to the Countess of Huntingdon, was lodged within the walls of the college. There mutual esteem was cherished, and new prospects began to open upon him. He perceived that the engagements of the place were perfectly correspondent to his principles and inclination, while her ladyship, and those who presided over the affairs of the college, discovered in their young visitor such decisive traits of piety, and strong indications of ministerial talent, that they soon urged him to enter upon a course of studies, as preparatory to being set apart for the work of the ministry. This kindred feeling, after some deliberation, induced him to comply with their wishes; and, instead of returning home to his father's house, he sent for such things as he needed, and never quitted Trevecca till he came forth in the capacity of a minister of the New Testament. At this time he was not more than twenty years of age, and with all the ardour of youthful piety, he entered upon the work of the Lord. God by his spirit had prepared him for

the duties of the christian ministry, and by a long train of providential incidents, had paved the way for his introduction to the office. His path of duty being thus rendered too plain to be mistaken, he devoted himself fully to that glorious and desirable, though usually arduous, engagement, in which men are said to be "workers together with God."

After rendering the usual attention to the theological and literary requisitions of the college, he began to preach in the connexion of his noble patroness. At first he supplied places mostly in the neighbourhood of Trevecca; but as his ministrations were found increasingly acceptable, and it became daily more evident, that God had "counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry," his sphere of labour was extended. Among other places he visited Bristol, and was preaching to large congregations there at the time the first fast day was observed on account of the American war. Soon after this he was supplying at Woolwich, and took that opportunity of preaching frequently to the convicts on board the hulks, as some of his memoranda, dated *on board*, remain to show. He now continued preaching incessantly, and with great ardour, throughout the connexion of the Countess of Huntingdon. At Chichester he continued some months, and proclaimed the gospel, which was so dear to his own heart, in many villages situate within a few miles of that city. From thence he went up to London, and preached there with great acceptance to many large congregations, and was gratified, at least in one instance, in having to deliver the message of divine mercy from that pulpit from which he first received its gracious salutation. In December, 1778, he went down to Dover, where he continued twelve months, and the

congregation were so desirous to retain his services, that they gave him a call to settle with them as their pastor; but this not entirely corresponding with his own inclination, at the expiration of twelve months, he quitted that place, and continued to labour, as before, in an occasional way, wherever his services were required. In 1780, Mr. Griffiths went down to Melbourne, in Leicestershire, where his labours proved so acceptable, that he again received a call to settle. Accordingly, after serious consideration and prayer, he yielded to the request of the church, and was ordained, at Melbourne, pastor of the united church of that place, and Castle Dunnington, on the 26th of September, 1780. In this place he formed another connexion, which proved an eminent blessing to him all his days, in the person of his now afflicted relict. With her he lived in the most perfect harmony, and the tenderest conjugal affection, to the close of life.

After labouring at Melbourne thirteen years, circumstances arose, by which he deemed it prudent to remove, and he began again to preach in the connexion of the late Countess of Huntingdon. He now continued to labour as an evangelist, during about four years, when he received an invitation to supply the destitute church of the independent denomination at Wallingford, Berks; and, accordingly, made a visit to that place. During the proposed term of his visit, Lady Ann Erskine wrote to him, requesting that he would go down to Birmingham, to supply a congregation in that town, representing them as a very quiet, peaceable people, and such as she thought would be perfectly congenial with his own disposition. But before this reached him he had engaged to

continue at Wallingford twelve months longer, and therefore returned a negative to the request of her ladyship. In the church book at Wallingford, it is recorded, that Mr. Griffiths was called to the discharge of the pastoral duties in that church, by a written instrument, dated the 19th of June, 1798. On the 1st of November Mr. Griffiths replied to the invitation, and signified his acceptance of the pastoral office; and on the 26th of the same month he was publicly set apart. This union promised happiness to the minister, and prosperity to the cause of Christ. The following year, the old chapel in which the congregation had worshipped was taken down, and the present building erected; and such was the respect entertained for the character of Mr. Griffiths, that the civil authorities of the town allowed him the use of the borough hall for public worship, during the whole time the new chapel was building. In the course of about three years, seventeen members were added to the church, and three others who had withdrawn from communion, were reconciled to their brethren, and re-admitted. The affairs of the society, which until this time had been regulated by a committee, were now intrusted to the pastor and deacons. Mr. Griffiths also carried the gospel into the populous but neglected village of Benson, where he obtained a place for preaching, which was soon after fitted up in a respectable way as a meeting-house, and has ever since been held as a preaching station connected with the church at Wallingford. In this state of things, it might reasonably have been inferred, that the union was of a permanent character; but the result proved how fallacious appearances frequently are, and how mutable are the circumstances of man in the present state.

It appears by the church books, that on the 4th of January, 1801, Mr. Griffiths gave notice of his intention to resign his charge, and on the Lord's day, the 5th of April, Mr. Griffiths closed the duties of his pastoral office at Wallingford. He now removed to Aston Tirrol, Berks, about five miles from his former residence, where he accepted a call to the pastoral office, and continued to labour till his death, a term of seventeen years. His first sermon preached at Aston was on Easterday, 1801, and his last sermon on Easterday, 1818.

There were several traits in the character of this worthy man, which ought not to be buried in oblivion, as they are calculated to excite others to the exercise of the same graces, and the same holy diligence in seeking after God. During the latter part of his life he laboured under many infirmities, and such as tended greatly to depress his spirits. In addition to this affliction, his property, which had been rather considerable, was gradually diminished, and within two years of his death, the little that remained was lost by a failure, which occurred about that time. But under these pecuniary and bodily afflictions, his soul still relied upon God, and he could say, "he hath done all things well." He was often assailed with doubts of his interest in God; but, reverting to first principles, and coming as a poor sinner to the cross of Christ, he was enabled constantly to triumph over the unbelief of his own heart, and the cruel suggestions of Satan. He rested steadfastly on the sure foundation, and though frequently the subject of fears, his faith rose superior to them, and he delighted to bear testimony to the unchangeableness of divine mercy. The habit of his mind often rendered him fearful in looking for-

ward to the exercises of the pulpit, and he frequently anticipated having nothing to set before the people; but he has been often heard to remark, that he was never left destitute except in the single instance already stated; but how embarrassed so ever his mind was, during the week, when the time of public service came, the grace of his Lord was sufficient for him. His style of preaching was deliberate and solemn; his method of treating the word of God judicious; and his general habit of preaching embraced the three great branches of pulpit discussion,—doctrine, experience, and practice. In his own pulpit, he was always most at home, and on the testimony of the aged and experienced christian, of the young and lively, and even of the critical, there he was usually very excellent.

In private life, his peaceable spirit adorned the holy gospel he preached. Such uninterrupted peace prevailed in the church over which he presided, that during the seventeen years of his ministry among them, he was never known to have a contentious word with an individual. Through the village he was revered as a man of the most unbending integrity, and yet of the most peaceable spirit; and on an appeal being made at his funeral, to the large congregation then present, respecting this trait in his character, accompanied by an affirmation, that he had no enemy throughout the village, an involuntary expression of assent was given by the whole audience.

His attachment to the word of God was such as became a man who believes, that it contains the words of eternal life, and that he is called of God to explain its contents to his fellow mortals. But while many are under equal obligations to study and revere the book of God, few are such dili-

gent biblical students as our departed friend. On one occasion he read his Bible through in three weeks. Some will say, this was a feverish effort of enthusiasm, and such zeal will soon degenerate into neglect of its object. Let the snarling spirit of censure stand confounded, and hide her malignant head, on learning, that at another time this man of God read his Bible through twelve times in one year. Will any dare still perversely to give a false colouring to this love of the sacred oracles, and say it was only with a view either to boast of a labour so herculean, or as papists repeat their prayers, to constitute a ground of meritorious justification before God. Let those who would ascribe the act to the former motive know, that he was seldom heard to mention the circumstance; and let those who would ascribe it to the latter cause, understand, that such diligent perusal of the word of God, was the habit of his life. It was no feverish effort, it was no subject of vain boasting, it was no work of self righteousness, or supererogation; it was the result of an ardent attachment to the word of God, and a holy delight in it, which must put to the blush the great majority of ministers and private christians. Under the influence of this principle he had, during forty-three or forty-four years, made the testimonies of God his constant counsellors; and in the course of that time, had read the Bible regularly through between eighty and ninety times. It may, indeed, excite surprise, how he was able, in a steady way, to give so large a portion of time to this practice. But this difficulty will vanish when it is understood, that his habit was to rise by break of day, and not unfrequently before day break, and sit in his study with his Bible before him until there was suf-

ficient light to begin his delightful task. Every man has some object; his was a spiritual object. Every man has some kind of emulation; his was a holy emulation. His object was acquaintance with the will of God; his emulation was, beside all his occasional reading, and the study of particular portions of the divine word, to have read the Holy Scriptures regularly through an hundred times, before he died. To a friend of the writer of this memoir, he said, that although there are many portions of the scriptures more interesting, and more precious than others, yet the profit he found in the connected and steady perusal of the whole book of God, was such as those could have no conception of, who had never made the experiment; and in his own experience, was such as abundantly to repay him for all his labour. These, therefore, were "a light unto his feet, and a lamp unto his path."

The end of such a man might reasonably be expected to be peaceful, and in him patience had its perfect work. His end was that of steady reliance upon Christ as his redeemer. During several months he lived in expectation, that his course would soon terminate. Like Simeon, he was waiting for the coming of his Lord, and expected soon to be dismissed from the toils and pains of this mortal life. His decline was rapid at the last, and his death unexpected, till within a short period of its occurrence. On Friday, the 20th of March, he found he had taken cold, and on the following Sabbath he felt much indisposed; yet he went through the two public services, preaching in the afternoon from Matthew, xxv. 34. "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." He returned home very unwell, and

from that time rapidly decayed. His energies failed, and all medical efforts were found unavailing, to re-invigorate a frame so totally exhausted. He was able to communicate with his friends but little, yet that little was highly satisfactory. To one friend he said, with an holy exultation of soul, "I know in whom I have *trusted*, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, until that day." To another he said, "it will soon be over, and all will be well." To another who spoke with him the day before he died, he said, "all is well, my doubts and fears are all gone; and all is well." He continued to linger till sabbath, the 29th; and then, without having been one Lord's day laid aside from his Master's work, about the time of closing morning service, he gently breathed his last.

*It was a death-like sleep,
A gentle wafting to eternal life.*

On the following Friday, his remains were conveyed to the

meeting-house, where he had so long proclaimed the tidings of salvation. The pall was borne by six ministers, and the corpse being placed in the aisle, the Rev. William Harris, of Wallingford, delivered a funeral sermon to a large congregation, who testified their deep regret, and the ardour of their former attachment, by floods of tears; no eye denied its tribute, and most ceased not to pour forth streams of grief, the whole time of the funeral service. When the sermon was ended, the corpse was deposited in a grave in front of the pulpit, and the Rev. Mr. Howse, of Goring, addressed the congregation, and closed with prayer.

Thus, in the 62nd year of his life, and the 42nd of his ministerial course, this venerable servant of Christ entered into the joy of his Lord, leaving behind him the character of an affectionate husband, a steady friend, a judicious counsellor, a man of peace, a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, and the father of his flock.

SHORT DISCOURSES FOR FAMILIES, &c.

No. VII.

ON THE INCREASE OF FAITH.

Lord, increase our faith. Luke xvii. v.

We have here a prayer to Christ. It is a prayer for spiritual blessings, and necessarily implies that the person to whom it is offered up, has an immediate access to the mind. It is, therefore, to be taken as a proof of his divinity. To have addressed such a prayer to any mortal, would have been impious.

The faith here spoken of, was probably of the miraculous kind, or that by which in the first ages of Christianity the servants of Christ were enabled to work miracles. The prayer, perhaps, was

suggested by the disciples failing in some attempt to perform a cure, an instance of which is expressly recorded in another part of the gospel history. But whether this were the case, as appears likely by the context, in which our Lord evidently speaks of this miraculous faith, or whether the disciples only entreated an increase of faith in his Messiahship, is not very material to our present purpose, which is, to consider this prayer as adapted to the situation of Christians in all ages and conditions.

That faith, which is so much spoken of in the New Testament, is a clear perception of the truths of Christianity, a cordial assent, upon the divine testimony, to the

doctrines and declarations of scripture, a solid persuasion of the veracity, and reliance on the faithfulness of God. This veracity relates to facts already declared to exist, his faithfulness to the promises, and declarations he has made respecting futurity. This faith is a principal subject of disquisition and encomium in the New Testament. It is so important in the scheme of Christianity as to be considered as equivalent to Christianity itself. The whole doctrine of the apostles is termed, "the faith once delivered to the saints." It is strongly distinguished both from sense and reason. Sense is the medium by which we obtain that knowledge which strikes immediately upon our senses. Reason is the medium of that knowledge which we derive by reflecting upon, and comparing the testimony of our own senses; and which we deduce from a process of argument more or less long and complicated. Faith is the medium of receiving those truths which God has recommended by his inspired servants, which we receive upon his authority, which are not objects of sense, and which could not be discovered or comprehended by reason. Hence faith necessarily implies a revelation; and nothing which is not revealed in the word of God is, in the scriptural sense of the word, an object of faith. It appears from this prayer of the disciples, that faith is capable of increase, and that an increase of faith is highly desirable.

I. We may observe that faith, even when sincere and genuine, admits of degrees. It admits of degrees as to its extent. The subject of it may be increased, the number of truths believed may be augmented. The sincere believer may, at first, have a very contracted view of the christian scheme, which, in course of time,

may be greatly enlarged by the perception of, and belief of, new facts. But this is in strictness not an increase of faith; it is rather an increase of knowledge.

The principle of faith is not altered by any addition to its objects. The increase of a man's faith consists in the augmentation of its strength and intensity, not in any addition to his knowledge or enlargement of his creed. In this sense, also, faith admits of continual increase. In the mind of many an humble and sincere believer, it is exceedingly feeble: it is but just enough to enable him to cast himself with trembling hope on the divine mercy. In others, it has advanced to such a state of strength and vigour, as to exclude all doubt and apprehension, and takes the name of the full assurance of faith. One great employment of the apostles in the discharge of their ministerial office was, to augment and strengthen this divine principle in the hearts of believers; to confirm their belief in the truths they had received and acknowledged, and "perfect that which was lacking in their faith." The principle of faith will of necessity be always weaker than that of sight. The strongest conviction we can attain in this world of invisible realities, and spiritual truths, will be far short of that which we shall attain in the world of glory. But it is impossible to say how near our faith may approach to vision,—how near we may live to heaven. Genuine believers are continually advancing to a more complete acquaintance and familiarity with the invisible and heavenly world; and none can say they have attained the most perfect and realizing degree of faith which even here it is possible to enjoy. The subjects of faith are of two kinds. Existing objects, and future promises. An increase of faith in both these re-

spects is bestowed in greater or less degrees on all believers. The attributes of God, the glories of the Redeemer, and the economy of redemption, are all rendered more habitually present, more visible and palpable to the mind. And the happiness of the future world may become so clearly revealed to our faith, that though the hope of future good must necessarily be inferior to the possession, it shall still far exceed and transcend the highest present enjoyment we can possess. It may be doubted by some how the principle of faith can be augmented; how it can possibly admit of any increase: but this proceeds from considering it only as a speculative assent of the understanding. The faith of the christian includes much more. A cordial approbation of the truths believed, a strong persuasion, an habitual reliance, an unshaken trust. Indications of increase appear in a greater power over temptations, and more comfort in trouble; a more constant influence of the truths of religion, and motives of piety; a more prompt and immediate recurrence of divine principles in the mind under every difficulty and trial.

The disciples, no doubt, felt a deficiency of faith both as christians and as apostles. And though their views of the character of Christ were, till after his ascension, and the effusion of his spirit, exceedingly confused and imperfect, they were yet impressed with such a belief in his divine authority and power, that they did not hesitate to pay him divine honours, and ask blessings at his hands which no creature could possibly bestow. All the gifts they possessed could only be exercised through faith in his name. All their miracles reflect honour upon him. It is his name, his authority, that gives efficacy to the instruments he employs.

If Peter and John work a miracle, they disclaim having performed it by any power or holiness of their own. "His name," say they, "through faith in his name, hath made this man strong." His name was sufficient at all times for the performance of any miracles whatever; but it is faith in his name that renders it effectual in every particular case. In the same manner his atonement and intercession are sufficient for the acceptance of all men; but it is faith in that atonement which makes it operative. The principle of faith is implanted that it may increase. It is intended that the inner man should grow stronger and stronger, for it is to survive the outer, and when that is fallen into decay, to remain a receptacle of the divine grace for ever. The tabernacle is to perish, but the graces that inhabit it, are to subsist and flourish without end; and those graces are sustained and animated by faith. The prayer of the apostles is the prayer of every genuine christian. The faith to which it refers is the only instrument of connexion with God, the only point of contact, the only means of cure. It is the seminal principle of all holiness and virtue, the seed from which all other graces are produced by a sort of spiritual vegetation, and from which only they can derive sustenance and growth.

II. The desirableness of an increase of faith will appear if we consider its advantages to ourselves, and its aspect towards God.

1. Its advantages as affecting ourselves may be regarded as affecting our *happiness*, and affecting our *holiness*. It was one principal design of Christianity to make men happier. The excellency of the christian dispensation is manifest in the advantages it connects incidentally with the

prosecution of its ultimate end. The gospel is justly denominated good news; it is glad tidings of great joy, and faith renders it glad tidings to us. Our enjoyments will bear a constant relation to our faith: the greater our faith, the greater our happiness.

This effect it will have, first, in delivering us from that perplexity which arises from an unsettled state of mind with regard to the truths of religion. This is an affliction which embitters the life of many a sincere believer; and the best remedy for it is, to cultivate the principles of vital religion in the heart. A stronger faith in the essentials of christianity will produce a settlement of mind respecting abstruse and more difficult points, which disputation can never afford.

Secondly, an increase of this divine principle will also relieve us from anxiety respecting our personal safety. It is the nature of light not only to manifest the existence of other things, but to manifest itself. At the dawn of day while the light is yet extremely feeble, its very existence may appear questionable. The limit which divides the twilight from the darkness is so slight and indefinite, that we are in doubt whether to call it night or morning. But the increasing power of the light evinces its genuine nature; and while it reveals other objects, removes all uncertainty respecting itself. It may be very difficult to distinguish the grain of mustard seed while in the state of seed, or in the early stages of vegetation, from other small seeds; but when it grows up into a plant, puts forth its stems, and becomes the largest of herbs, all doubt respecting its nature is dispelled. The faith of the Christian, in like manner, discovers its genuineness by its growth; and the increase of its power over the mind, pro-

duces an increased conviction of its existence.

Thirdly, the more we see of God in Christ, the more beauty will be perceived, and the more satisfaction experienced. All earthly glory is only a reflection, or rather it is only a shadow of the divine glory. If the contemplation of earthly excellence fills us with admiration, how much more will that of the heavenly! If the charms of a perishable world, and the faculties of mortal creatures, fill us with admiration, how much more will the glories of the celestial kingdom, and the attributes of the Most High. We are pleased to explore the progress of society, and the policy of princes; but how much nobler is it to trace the designs of Divine Providence gradually unfolded amidst the changes and revolutions of human affairs! How much more delightful to watch the development of his scheme of mercy, from its first disclosure, to the final consummation of his purpose! What subject can be more transporting than the character of his Son who was with him before the foundation of the world, and whose "delights were with the sons of men;" whose appearance in our likeness was obscurely announced for the consolation of our first parents, prefigured by a multitude of types and emblems, and gradually declared with increasing certainty and precision by a succession of prophecies! What more interesting than to contemplate his mysterious incarnation, his holy and beneficent life; to follow him in his humiliation, to behold the agonies of his crucifixion, and hail his entrance into the kingdom of glory! If light is sweet, and it is pleasant to behold the material sun, how much more extatic to trace the course of the "Sun of Righteousness," and be absorbed in the contemplation of his glory! Who

would exchange this for any other knowledge? Who would not exclaim with the apostle, "yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord?" How justly might he cry out, "God forbid that I should glory,"—he is not content with saying, God forbid that I should *believe*, but "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He not only believed in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but rejoiced and gloried in it, which is the fruit of believing.

The Christian whose faith is thus increased, dwells in a calm and holy light, in the midst of a heavenly illumination, which infuses serenity and joy into his soul. It discloses to him the invisible world; it reveals the wonders of futurity; it unveils the glory of God, and breaks down the barrier by which his soul is prevented from rejoining and blending itself with the Infinite Spirit; it removes the impediments to his intercourse with the blessed; it transports him into the very presence of the Eternal. He is allowed to walk in the precincts of heaven, and hear the multitude of voices, ascribing "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." Such are the transports that result from believing; such joy arises from faith: and, as no stream can rise higher than the fountain from which it springs, our faith is the measure of our joy.

An increase of faith will also have the most desirable influence on our sanctification. First, it will diminish our sensibility to the pleasures of sin: as far as our gratifications are criminal, it will destroy it, and moderate it, as far as they are innocent. The joys of earth will appear too feeble, transitory, and inconstant;

too unworthy and unsatisfying to engage the heart which has tasted the fruit of this "precious faith." Every man has his favourite pleasure. We are sensitive creatures, led by the desire of enjoyment, and governed by the pleasures we prefer. God has consulted this part of our nature, in making our holiness conducive to our happiness, and rendering the delights of piety far superior to the pleasures of sin. The good man who has enjoyed the persuasion of his favour, the proofs of his love, has a new appetite imparted, which controls every animal desire, and makes him "hunger and thirst after righteousness," as the highest delight.

Secondly, faith brings the strongest motives to holiness into contact with the mind. Faith is so important to the growth of holiness, that it is represented as the seed from which every virtue and grace of the christian life originates. This efficacy is natural, inasmuch as faith has a direct and proper tendency to produce and strengthen the other graces; and as it unites us to Christ, from whom, as the branches from the root, we derive supplies of divine help and influence. It is faith that lays hold of an eternal inheritance, and renders us indifferent to the calamities and afflictions of life. Hence it produces resignation. The believer "takes joyfully the spoiling of his goods, knowing that he has in heaven a better and an enduring substance." It "works by love;" it kindles a fire in the breast, which grows stronger and stronger, and purifies the heart from all its pollutions. It works by hope; gives steadfastness to the soul; and opposes a shield to all the assaults of the tempter. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth?" By faith our eyes are kept fixed upon Jesus; we are brought near

to the fountain of divine influence, and “ receive out of his fulness, grace for grace.” Earnestly endeavour, therefore, to increase your faith. “ This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.”

2. An increase of faith is desirable, as its respects the divine glory. It glorifies God by sanctifying the character of his people. “ Herein is your father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.” Thus “ your light will be made to shine forth among men, so that others, seeing your good works, will glorify your Father who is in heaven.” The perfections of God are reflected in the lives of his saints. They are to show forth the virtues of God. Faith glorifies God, by renouncing all self-dependence, and all hope from any other source than his mercy. It makes us rich, yet consciously poor. It realizes the veracity and faithfulness of the divine character. It confides in his unlimited power. It leans on him in the dark; trusts him in all worlds; and takes his word for eternal happiness. It looks forward, on the strength of his promises, to the possession of joys, which “ eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived.” It unites itself to the vivifying principle, which lives eternally, and gives all things life; to that power, which will, in due time, call into existence a wonderful scene of life, and beauty, and glory, which the visible world could not contain. It attaches itself to the footstool of the divine throne, and feels itself firm amidst the shakings and convulsions of the universe. Hence it appears how desirable is an increase of faith. The desire of its increase is essential to true religion. If you feel no desire for an enlarged and confirmed persuasion of divine truth, no want of faith, you are utterly destitute of vital religion.

Let me intreat you to beware of your danger; remember “ that without faith, it is impossible to please God.” To those who are desirous of increasing their faith, let me recommend the most effectual means.

The first is prayer. Our text affords an encouraging example. The prayer of the apostles was successful; their faith was increased; though at one time it was wavering and feeble; it was strengthened from above. They became the ministers of mercy to an afflicted and guilty world, and are now exalted to the regions of glory, to the vision and enjoyment of God. Secondly, converse much with the objects of faith. Men insensibly become assimilated to the persons they associate with, the books they read, the sentiments they hear, the manners they behold. Study the Scriptures, therefore. Reflect upon the truths of religion. There is an holy infection, I should rather say a sweet, a divine influence in these contemplations, that will inspire life and vigour into the soul. That christian is miserably wanting to himself, who suffers a day to pass without searching the Scriptures, or who contents himself with a careless and hurried perusal. It was the description of a saint of old, which has never yet been cancelled, that his “ delight was in the law of the Lord,” that he “ meditated in the law of his God day and night.” The Scriptures are a receptacle of spiritual truth, an inventory of the riches of heaven, a divine register of the treasures of eternity. As taste in literature is produced by studying the noblest works of human genius, your moral taste will be purified, and your spiritual discernment improved, by the study of the Holy Scriptures. Thirdly, watch against all objects that have a contrary tendency. Set a guard upon your

senses. Avoid all objects that encourage the luxury, and increase the corruption of the heart. There is nothing obscures the atmosphere of faith, so much as the sullen, dark, and polluting damps of a sensual mind. Even moderate and innocent gratifications have a tendency to diminish the influence of faith. To walk by sense is directly opposed to walking by faith. "Love not the world." Seek not to be wealthy. Dread the consequence of sudden prosperity. Walk in this world as "strangers and pilgrims,"

as sojourners that have "no continuing city." "This is not your rest." You cannot secure two worlds. Seek "a better country, that is, a heavenly." Be content to secure "a building of God, when this earthly house of your tabernacle is dissolved, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Fourthly, wait upon God in divine ordinances. Be diligent in attending upon the services of religion, and the means of grace; and in all your worship make it your object to obtain an increase of faith.

ORIGINAL ESSAYS, COMMUNICATIONS, &c.

REFLECTIONS ON NEGRO SLAVERY, AND ON WAR. BY MR. MONTGOMERY.

(Extracted from the *Sheffield Iris*.)

LIFE is the most precious of earthly blessings, and liberty is the next to it. Without the former no other can be possessed; without the latter, none can be enjoyed in security. War, therefore, the determined destroyer of life, must be the greatest crime that society can commit, and the enslavement of human beings is second only in atrocity to that. Yet war and slavery have been coeval with each other, and, perhaps, coeval with the existence of society itself,—using the term society in the general sense of a social compact among families, not immediately akin, for mutual advantage and general protection. Virtue, however, or a proportion of virtue, has been rendered by the universal Sovereign of nature, so indispensable in every form of government by which society is regulated, that no state, however barbarous or profligate its population, has ever yet been attempted to be ruled by any other than laws, purporting to be just, and equal, and in the main actually

being so, notwithstanding their imperfect administration:—society on any other basis could no more hold together, than the sands on the sea-shore, taken up by a whirlwind, could form a consistent body, and remain suspended in mid-air, without one principle of coherence. Virtue indeed, is so essential in this world, that it is the whole business of vice to counterfeit it in public; and in its name, and in its semblance, nay even by its authority and sanctions, to work every purpose of avarice, revenge, and ambition. There has been nothing on earth more insulting to common sense, and nothing under heaven more blasphemous, than the false and hypocritical pretences under which the most wanton and flagrant hostilities between nations, both professing Christianity, and each appealing to God and man to attest the justice of their cause, have been frequently commenced; while the rancour of protracted belligerency, and the hollowness of constrained pacification, have been the natural and pregnant consequences of mischief so comprehensive, securing and entailing both a possession and perpetuity

of evils, to the fathers, and to the children, even to the third and fourth generations. The enslavement of the human species, the twin brother of war, has been palliated and vindicated, under the same pretences, with the same sincerity, and the same success,—the sincerity of delusion, and the success of unprincipled violence.

Spain, as the first discoverer and conqueror of regions beyond the Atlantic, first introduced negro slavery into the West Indies, and afterwards extended the system to her continental territories. By her this traffic in the blood and bones, and sinews of live human creatures, has been pursued for three centuries, not only with undiminishing, but with increasing appetite for gain, and aggravation of cruelty. A period, however, has arrived, when neither she, nor any other country, can continue this sacrilege much longer. We cannot look back at any era in past history, when a commerce so lucrative, and carried on with such impunity, could have been so gradually, speedily, and effectually extinguished, as it must now be done; not by one nation only, but by all concerned in it; and not by compulsion, but by spontaneous abandonment. This is the matured fruit of the long and arduous struggle against the Slave Trade in England; had that struggle been less obstinate or protracted, the victory would not have been so decisive and universal. "Spontaneous abandonment," we said, not because those who get their wealth by it have willingly relinquished, or will ever relinquish it, from pure motives; but because the mild spirit of Christianity, which is a spirit of liberty as well as of benevolence in every other form, has so far gained the ascendancy in this country, that it is no longer con-

sonant with the generous feelings of Britons to tolerate the inhuman and impolitic practice: and this country has so far gained the ascendancy—(a *moral*, if not a *political* ascendancy)—over her neighbours, that every continental power, feeling "how awful goodness is," has consented to follow her example, and abolish one of the two *opprobria* of Christendom,—the enslavement of human beings: when they, and Britain at the head of them, shall unite to abolish the other, and the greatest,—war, *then* leagues among sovereigns may, perhaps, deserve the title of "*Holy Alliances*"; but *till* then, the epithet can scarcely be allowed to be legitimate.

These reflections arose from reading the Decree of the King of Spain, abolishing the traffic for slaves on the coast of Africa, *north* of the line, *forthwith*, and the traffic *south* of the line, *after* the 30th of May, 1820. This is the most signal, and we will not fear to add, with Trafalgar and Waterloo before our eyes, the most glorious triumph obtained by this country, over either friends or foes, for a century past. Britain alone could have achieved it; Britain alone would have attempted it: the annals of mankind furnish no example that we can recollect, of negotiations carried on specifically, but energetically, for objects of pure beneficence; perhaps there never was before, a crisis among great and jealous nations, when one could have been permitted thus to interfere with a subject in which the mercenary interests of its rivals were implicated. The decree referred to, contains the strangest justification of the Slave Trade on record:—after stating, that the "introduction of negro slaves into America, was one of the first measures which his predecessors dictated for the sup-

port and prosperity of those vast regions, soon after their discovery;" and alleging the necessity for employing such labourers to work the mines, and cultivate the soil,—tasks to which the natives were unequal, and in attempting which, the whole race actually perished, and became extinct in the islands, His Catholic Majesty says:—

" This measure, which did not create slavery, but only took advantage of that which existed through the barbarity of the Africans, by saving from death their prisoners, and alleviating their sad condition, far from being prejudicial to the negroes transported to America, conferred upon them, not only *the incomparable blessing of being instructed in the knowledge of the true God, and of the only religion in which the Supreme Being desires to be adored by his creatures*, but likewise all the advantages which accompany civilization, without subjecting them in their state of servitude to a harder condition than that which they endured in freedom, when free in their native country."

Really on reading such a paragraph, a man ought to hold his breath a moment, and consider whether the expression of contempt, abhorrence, or indignation, be most due to sentiments so profane and so imbecile. We shall barely observe, that it may be as difficult in the day of judgment for the oppressors of the negroes to answer for their neglect of the souls, as for their maltreatment of the bodies of their victims, notwithstanding the *piety in italics*, which deserves particular attention in the above extract:—and further, that if sovereigns, and statesmen, and their mercenary subjects, can deceive themselves respecting not having created slavery,—having conferred on their negroes " the incom-

parable blessing of being instructed in the knowledge of the true God,"—and give them " the advantages of civilization," without subjecting them to " a harder condition in servitude, than that which they endured in freedom in their native country;"—if the oppressors of the negroes can deceive themselves with such *fable-ties*, (we are forced to invent a word that will defy criticism,) *they are the only persons who can be so deceived*; or if these things be so, *they are the only persons on earth who are in the secret of their existence.*

But if this be the strongest extenuation of the infamy of the Slave Trade on record, the same document contains, among many most excellent and incontrovertible reasons for its abolition, one so admirably unique, that we must quote it:

" The advantage, likewise, which resulted to the inhabitants of Africa from their transportation to a civilized country, is not now so urgent or exclusive, since an enlightened nation has undertaken the glorious task of civilizing them in their own land."

This from Spain! This from the seat of the Inquisition! This from Ferdinand VII.!—The "enlightened nation" here intended is no other than Great Britain; the *means* by which she has undertaken to "civilize" the negroes "in their own land," are those of ordinary instruction, and the preaching of the gospel; the *agents* are the *African Institution*, and the ministers and school masters of the *Church Missionary Society*! This last is an ominous name; and if the *Church Missionary Society* have, indeed, had any hand in turning the head of the King of Spain, on this subject, it could not surprise any man in his sober senses to hear, that some zealous archdeacon had set out on a *protesting crusade*, to Madrid, to put

the weather-cock on his Majesty's shoulders right again; otherwise who knows what may follow, should the said Society, in like manner, "undertake the glorious task" of "civilizing" the Spaniards by its missionaries, "in their native land."—One circumstance, however, greatly lessens both the dignity and the worth of this *coup de grace*, (for we will not pervert plain truth so much as to call it an *act of grace*,) in favour of the poor Africans. It appears, by a special clause in a recent treaty, that his Britannic Majesty binds himself to pay his Spanish Majesty the sum of four hundred thousand pounds sterling, as a compensation for any real or imaginary losses which the latter or his subjects may sustain by this abandonment of an infernal traffic!

To the Editors.

**REMARKS ON AN ARTICLE IN
THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER
FOR APRIL, 1818.**

THOUGH I am a conscientious dissenter, I have been long accustomed to read, with pleasure and edification, the pages of the *Christian Observer*; and, notwithstanding its frequent violations of christian charity, and the *sectarian* spirit it perpetually breathes, have been disposed to bear with its infirmities, and, upon the whole, to hail it as a valuable auxiliary to the great cause of evangelical religion. There is, however, a paper inserted in the April Number of that publication, which is of so singular a character,—which breathes such a spirit of inveterate hostility towards every class of dissenters,—and, above all, which so manifestly prefers the supposed interests of a party, to the good of the universal church, and the glory of the Divine Redeemer,—that I cannot forbear to request permission, through the medium of the *Christian Instructor*, to ani-

madvert briefly upon that highly objectionable article. If the letter to which I refer, had contained merely the private opinions of an individual clergyman, however much I might have regretted, that party prejudices should have been allowed to warp the judgment and blunt the christian feelings of its writer, I should not have deemed it necessary to notice them thus publicly. But, it must be evident to every attentive and unprejudiced reader of the *Christian Observer*, that there is a perfect accordance between the spirit diffused through the letter now referred to, and that which has (of late years especially) pervaded the publication in which it is contained. Frequent opportunities have been seized by its writers to inculcate, either directly or indirectly, upon all true churchmen, the obligation of cleaving to the walls of their parochial temples, even though they should resound continually with "false doctrine, heresy, and schism," rather than commit the unpardonable sin of seeking the "pure gospel" *without* those hallowed precincts. The writer of this article well *knows*, that this has been the advice deliberately given by some clergymen, who are denominated evangelical, and who are generally supposed to be intimately connected with the *Christian Observer*, to those, who have felt conscientious scruples on the subject. I feel myself justified, therefore, in concluding, that this is not the advice merely of the individual clergyman consulted on this occasion; but a rule of action prescribed and sanctioned by a party, of whom we might surely have hoped better things. The case (as stated page 227, vol. 17, of the *Christian Observer*) seems to have been simply this:—A gentleman of large property, and pious zeal, whose love to the gospel, and de-

sire of doing good, rose above his attachment to the national church, of which he is a member and ornament; having the unhappiness to reside in a parish, where the officiating clergyman not only forbears to preach the gospel, but "propounds sentiments at variance with its essential doctrines;" and feeling compassion for the multitude of his fellow parishioners, who were in danger of being misled by these corrupt and anti-christian instructions, inquires of a clerical friend, whom he believes to be cordially attached to evangelical truth, "whether," under these circumstances, "it was not his duty to bring the preaching of the pure gospel into the parish, by introducing a teacher in some dissenting communion." Scarcely, perhaps, will the statement be credited by some of your readers, but it is nevertheless true, that an answer is coldly given in the negative; and a train of jesuitical, sophistical, far-fetched reasonings, (if reasonings they may be called,) are employed for the purpose of explaining and justifying that conclusion.*

* It is a remarkable coincidence, that when the congregation of St. Giles's, Reading, were, by the death of the Rev. Mr. Cadogan, placed in circumstances very similar to those here referred to; application was made to the Rev. John Newton, for his advice upon the subject; and it is confidently stated, by those who recollect the circumstance, that the counsel given by him was similar to that given by the casuist in the Christian Observer. So liable are the best of men to have their judgments biassed by habitual attachment to some favourite system. But in both instances, as was very natural, those who felt that their highest interests, and those of their families, were involved in the question, rejected the counsel of such casuists, and followed the dictates of conscience. We are informed, on the best authority, that the good people of Long Sutton have determined to introduce the preaching of the gospel into their town, through the medium of the dissenters.

EDITORS.

For the purpose of establishing this position, the reverend clergyman first endeavours to convince his correspondent, that he had stated his case too strongly; that he had felt concerning it too deeply; and that it was not necessary to exercise such commiseration towards his misguided neighbours. Observe, gentle reader, how the case is softened down, till, instead of being objects of christian compassion, they become highly enviable characters. "I have frequently thought," says this clergyman, "that the situation of English parishes, not favoured by Providence," (mark where the blame is laid!) "with such incumbents or curates, as ministers of Christ ought to be, in doctrine and in conduct," (what a very delicate mode of describing an anti-evangelical, and immoral clergyman!) "is occasionally described in language very unsuitable to the actual state of things; and in such a manner as to represent such a case as the present, as almost parallel to that of the heathen world." He then proceeds to show, that, though the pulpit and the desk were completely at variance, insomuch that the sermons delivered from the one, perpetually contradicted the lessons read from the other; yet these good people, for whom his correspondent felt so tenderly, had "the gospel of Christ actually and fully preached to them, in the ever-varying portions of scripture, and the evangelical liturgy constantly read in their hearing." Admitting this, does not the writer perceive, that his argument proves too much? That it supersedes altogether the necessity of a christian ministry, and even of public worship. For if they have adequate means of christian instruction, who do not possess the advantage of a gospel ministry, why was it instituted? Why has it been perpetuated by

the supreme head of the church? Why may not persons be content to read their Bibles and Prayer Books at home, especially as then they would not labour under the disadvantage of hearing contrary doctrines propounded *ex cathedrâ?* But how does this representation accord with the apostolical testimony contained in Romans x. 14. with the whole history of the christian church, which proves abundantly that genuine religion has flourished or declined according to the evangelical or heterodox tone of its officiating ministers; or even with the sentiments expressed by this same Christian Observer in another place? If the subject were not too serious for such an allusion, I should feel inclined to say, that the Christian Observer proves himself as adroit a special pleader on both sides of a question, as the learned counsel, who conducted the famous cause of "Nose versus Eyes," reported by Cowper. For whereas, in the letter before me, it is pleaded, that "the gospel is *actually and fully preached*, and consequently *adequate means of salvation* are enjoyed, though one, and that a most important portion of divine service, namely, the sermon, be at variance with the sentiments delivered from the desk; in another part of the same Number, the reviewer of the Bishop of Gloucester's Sermons finds it convenient to argue, at considerable length, that "*preaching*" is, in some measure, an instrument peculiar to christianity; that "wherever real religion has decayed, it has uniformly been marked by a corresponding declension in the practice of preaching;" and that by this, as an instrument, the gospel has been propagated, and a "great spiritual reform accomplished." Indeed, this is not the only instance in which it would be an easy task, to make out a case of

Christian Observer versus Christian Observer.

Having cleared the way by these preliminary remarks for his whole train of artillery, this clerical writer at length opens a battery upon the enemy, which had for a time been carefully masked. He tells his correspondent, that the whole question resolves itself into an "inquiry of comparison." "Is it probable," he asks, "that good would finally result on the whole, from an attempt to improve by the introduction of a teacher, such as you mention," (a circuitous mode of avoiding the odious term, dissenting minister,) "the existing means of salvation in the parish." How strange, how unnatural, how far-fetched, are the terms employed here—"improve the existing means of salvation!" How unlike the plain dealing of truth and uprightness! Does he then mean to assert, that evangelical truth, from the lips of one who has not received episcopal ordination, is likely to be so deteriorated, that it is placed upon a level, if not below the anti-evangelical delusions of a false parochial guide; and that the existing means of salvation are not likely to be improved in a parish by the preaching of what is admitted to be the pure gospel, unless it be delivered in a parish church, and by a parochial clergyman? Does he mean to deny that dissenting ministers are the instruments of saving souls from death by the conversion of sinners to God? If so, why not state it plainly and openly, instead of shrouding himself in such jesuitical forms of expression?

"The answer," he proceeds, "requires the balancing of benefits to be expected, and of evils to be anticipated." And now we are prepared to expect a nice calculation, a debtor and creditor statement, placed, if not in opposite columns, yet at least in

clear contrast; so that the eye might glance at once over these benefits and evils, and see on which side the balance stands. No such thing: this would have been far too hazardous a measure; the fallacy of the statement to be presented would be too glaring to be overlooked. One item, which conscience would have compelled him to note down on the profit side, would have frustrated his whole design. I mean, the probable deliverance of souls from eternal death, by the manifestation of the truth to the consciences of sinners. Let but one such case be distinctly brought forward, and it is more than enough to scatter all those hideous phantoms, which the fears or the bigotry of this good man had conjured up. But this writer is too cautious and practised a sophist, thus to defeat his own argument; he therefore leaves all the benefits which might be expected to accrue from the introduction of the "pure gospel" into a parish, to the imagination of his correspondent, and satisfies himself with simply affirming, "that the nature of those benefits is obvious, and likely to have been fully weighed by himself." Is this what might have been expected from a man, or a set of men, cordially attached to the gospel of Christ, thus to sink in silence the incalculable benefits which have ever been found to arise from its faithful ministration, by whomsoever it may have been dispensed? Is it consistent even with fair reasoning or common honesty, thus to shuffle over an essential part of the argument; that which must at once decide the question, if it depend upon a balancing of benefits and evils? These must not, however, be forgotten, however carefully it may be kept out of sight by the writer of this letter. Is it nothing that those who have been bewildered in the paths of error, held fast

by strong delusions, soothed with vain and delusive hopes, be faithfully warned of their danger, instructed in the way of salvation, and urged, by every consideration calculated to influence a rational mind, to flee from the wrath to come? Is it nothing that those who have been taught proudly to rest upon their works, as a ground of justification and final acceptance; who have been taught to rely upon their early baptism, as necessarily conveying regenerating grace, and ensuring the salvation of their souls, by constituting them "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;" or who have been instructed to place that dependance on rites and forms, and ceremonies of human invention, which ought to be placed alone on the Saviour; is it nothing that characters of this description be brought as suppliants to the feet of Jesus, clothed with humility, and in their right minds? Is it nothing that this prey be taken from the mighty, and these lawful captives delivered? Yet these, and much more, are the beneficial effects daily produced by the preaching of the pure gospel, even though it may happen to be proclaimed in a conventicle by an "unauthorized teacher."

Let us, however, contemplate for a moment the train of ills, which are supposed, by the writer of this letter, to weigh down all the "good which would finally result" from the proposed experiment. First, "certainty, or a very high probability, that a number of persons will be permanently alienated from the Church of England." What then? If truly converted to God, they are added to the universal church, which ought to be far dearer to every true christian than any party interests whatever. Secondly, divisions and separations in the church of Christ will be effected,

not on account of wrong imputed to the church, but merely from disapprobation of one of its incidental ministers." But in the case referred to, where rests the blame of such separation, but with that church which fosters in her bosom "hirelings, who care not for the sheep," and obliges them to wander abroad in search of green pastures? Besides, do not these very ministers, that prove the occasion of separation, *themselves* form an integral part of the church? How then can it be said, that it is not on account of "wrong imputed to the church?" The sin of schism lies with those who furnish a just cause for separation; and surely the *want* of a gospel ministry within a church, nay more, the *continual promulgation of dangerous and destructive errors*, will be acknowledged to be a just reason for withdrawal from any communion. Thirdly, "heart-burnings, dissensions, and party-spirit, will arise in the parish." Why this is just such an argument as one might have expected from the Twinings, Scott Warings, and all other enemies of missions. It might be brought to bear with equal effect upon every attempt to propagate the gospel, either at home or abroad; for so long as the mass of society is depraved, so long as the carnal mind is enmity against God, every such attempt is sure to provoke opposition, and produce heart-burnings. Upon this principle, if a member of an irreligious family be converted, he ought not to follow up his convictions, or abandon his former practices, lest his conduct should lead to domestic strife, and "heart burnings arise" in the members of his family. Surely too great a sacrifice is made to the preservation of peace, when the gospel is abandoned, and false doctrines are habitually listened to, for its sake. Fourthly, "There will always be a risk of being disappointed in the teacher introduced. He *may* prove not truly pious, or he *may* be pious, but indiscreet," &c. &c. All this is admitted; but, then, there is this important difference between the introduction of a dissenting teacher, and the situation of an incumbent in a parish. In the former case, the remedy is at hand: if he preach not the gospel, or fall into immoralities of conduct, he is no longer recognized as a minister; he is dismissed, or compelled, by various means, to relinquish a post of which he has proved himself unworthy. But in the latter, there is no remedy, but that which arises out of the brevity of human life, and even then the hope is in many cases but faint and distant, of a more enlightened and pious successor. Fifthly, "should the views of the incumbent become altered," (a circuitous mode of expressing genuine conversion,) "or should he be succeeded by a diligent and pious clergyman; the separation once begun, will continue, however much those who first introduced it, may lament the steps which they took." In illustration of this, an example is adduced of the introduction of an independent minister into a parish, by some religious individuals, who were "wearied with the sad state of things in the church." When, at a subsequent period, an evangelical clergyman obtained the living, it was found that the schism had taken too deep root to be eradicated, and these pious friends had become too much attached to their minister to forsake him. This independent minister even had the presumption to defend his own principles as a dissenter, for which offence he is branded by this liberal writer, as an "avowed and violent enemy of the Church of England." It

seems to have been confidently expected that this last argument would be attended with an overwhelming force of conviction; and that after such a strong case having been made out, of a permanent dissenting church, having been planted by the hands of a few schismatical renegadoes, all his correspondent's fears for the safety and stability of the national church, would be wrought up to their highest pitch, and he would be effectually deterred from making the proposed experiment. But how unlike is the spirit betrayed on this occasion from that of the Apostle, who assures the christians at Philippi, that though "some preached Christ of envy and strife, and others of good will;" though the one preached Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to his bonds, and the other of love; yet notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ was preached, "and therein," said this devoted apostle, "I do rejoice; yea, and I will rejoice." How unlike the spirit of the objection stated above to that of Jesus, who forbade his disciples to rebuke one whom they saw casting out devils in his name, because he followed not them, reminding them, that no one who wrought a miracle in his name, could lightly speak evil of him, "for," added he, "he that is not against us, is on our part."

It does not appear, from the article on which I have presumed to comment, what was the issue of this transaction; whether this pastoral letter removed the apprehensions of the good man to whom it was addressed, on behalf of his unenlightened and misguided neighbours; and convinced him that it was his duty, as a churchman, rather to hear false doctrine *within* the pale of the establishment, than to wander *without* in search of the "uncor-

rupted gospel of Christ;" or whether the warm current of christian zeal and liberality, which flowed from the heart of this pious layman, bore down all the feeble barriers which prejudice and bigotry had reared, and induced him to devise liberal things. I would hope, for the credit of his understanding, the benefit of his ignorant and deluded neighbours, and the honour of religion, that the latter was the resolution finally adopted. But whatever may have been the motive which prompted the writing and publication of this letter, or whatever may have been its influence upon the individual to whom it was addressed, one question obviously arises from the whole of the transaction, which it becomes christians, whether within or without the pale of the national establishment, most seriously to consider,—*is there not something radically wrong, either in the state of our own hearts, or in the system to which we belong, when "our own things are preferred to those of Jesus Christ," and the "pure gospel" itself is sacrificed to party prejudices and sectarian attachment?*

INDAGATOR.

~~~~~

**ON THE WRITINGS OF WICKLIFF;  
HIS TRANSLATION OF THE NEW  
TESTAMENT, AND THE CAUSES  
OF THE HOSTILITY MANIFESTED  
BY THE CHURCH OF ROME  
AGAINST THAT REFORMER  
AND HIS DOCTRINES.**

WHILE justice to William Tyndale demanded the acknowledgment, made in a former number of the London Christian Instructor,\* that he was the first Englishman who conceived the patriotic design of circulating the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in the vernacular tongue, by printing them for general use; it ought not to be forgotten, that

\* Vide No. 1.

the New Testament, and parts of the Old, had been translated nearly a century and a half before Tyndale's time, by that great luminary and reformer John Wickliff: and it may fairly be presumed, from the character of Wickliff, as displayed in his life and writings, that had the art of printing been known in his days, he would have anticipated Tyndale in his project.

All the circumstances of Wickliff's life remarkably illustrated the wisdom of divine providence, in preparing and bringing into action instruments proper for the accomplishment of great and glorious enterprizes. Wickliff's lot was cast in an age when some of the abuses which emanated in such abundance from the corrupt fountain of popery had become intolerable, even to those who were otherwise devoted to the see of Rome. Accordingly, a successful controversy in behalf of the university of Oxford, with the order of mendicants or begging friars, first raised him into notice, and, in the year 1361, procured his election to the dignity of master of Balliol College, Oxford; and his subsequent success in defending the king and parliament, by his learned writings, and unanswerable arguments, against those humiliating acts of homage which had been exacted by the popes, from the time of King John, established his reputation, and gave him an opportunity, by his public lectures in the university, of diffusing the light of truth all around him, as fast as it beamed on his own mind. He appears to have been led on, like his successor in the great work of reformation, Martin Luther, by an honest mind, and an intrepid spirit; but without knowing to what point he was destined to go, or whether the habits of inquiring into existing abuses, and protesting against them, would ultimately lead him.

As his earliest productions were levelled against papal innovations, his thoughts were set to explore the corruptions of that system; and the more he thought, and the more he investigated, the darker did it appear, till at length he brought himself to a full conviction that the pope was no other person than, "*Antichrist, the worldly priest of Rome, the most cursed of clippers and purse-keepers.*"

It is much to be regretted that not even a correct catalogue of the writings of this Reformer has yet been presented to the British public, who ought long since to have been in possession of a complete collection of his works. His biographer, Lewis, has preserved a few fragments in his life, and a list of manuscripts which had come to his knowledge, consisting of one hundred and ninety articles; but while some of these are known to be Wickliff's, upon the testimony of his adversaries, who quoted them in the list of heretical propositions which they extracted from his writings, others are only ascribed to the reformer on the ground of similarity of style, or some other internal evidence; and many of the manuscripts mentioned in Lewis's list, having never been collated, are supposed to be but chapters or parts of larger works under different titles.

The dates of many of these writings are at present as obscure as their identity; but whoever considers the course of Wickliff's life, and the nature of the controversies which led to his complete conviction of the errors of the church of Rome, will probably be led to conclude that those which are in the Latin tongue are the earliest; and that the English tracts, and particularly the English translation of the Scriptures, were produced during the latter years of his re-

sidence at Oxford, when his eyes were completely open, and his mind convinced of the importance and sufficiency, for all the purposes of salvation, of the Sacred Scriptures, without the notes or comments, or perverse interpolations of the schoolmen.

Several manuscript copies of Wickliff's translation of the Testament appear to have been made in his life-time, and were, no doubt, read and preserved by his admirers. Some are still extant. How or where they have been preserved, is not fully known; but, by whatever means they have been handed down to us, it is certain they could be but little attended to, and must have been kept with very great privacy during many years after his death. It may, indeed, be considered as extraordinary, that any of them have escaped destruction, when it is recollectcd that Courtney, Archbishop of Canterbury, obtained letters patent from Richard II. addressed to the chancellor and scholars of Oxford, commanding them forthwith to seize all writings which favoured Wickliff's doctrines, and destroy them; and that Wickliff himself, and his writings, were afterwards formally condemned as heretical by the council of Constance, anno 1415.

The Rev. John Lewis, M. A. in his account of the life and works of Wickliff, printed in the year 1731, already alluded to, has mentioned ten manuscript copies of Wickliff's Testament, which are preserved in libraries at Cambridge, six at Oxford, one in his own possession, and one in the library of the Derdings at Surrendon—Dering, in Kent. It was chiefly from the two last that Mr. Lewis published his edition.\*

\* This work having become scarce, has lately been reprinted in one volume, quarto, edited by the Rev. Henry Hervey Baber, Sub-librarian of the British Museum.

Wickliff's translation of the Scriptures excited the fiercest animosity in many dignified ecclesiastics of his time; because, as it was fully evident that the Scriptures themselves were, on many accounts, displeasing to the church of Rome, it was not possible that its members could view with complacency their translation and circulation, even though the latter was confined to the schools of learning, and to the libraries of such of the English nobility (but few in number) as could afford to possess the high and costly luxury of *manuscript libraries*.

The following may be considered as among the most obvious reasons of the dislike of the popish clergy to an English version of the Scriptures. They represent the founder of Christianity as a lover of peace, and as a person of very mean worldly estimation, and altogether opposed by his example to state and grandeur. They give no sanction to *wars, crusades*, and such enterprizes in the name of Christ, nor to the pageantry, pomp, wealth, and pride, of the *clerical order*. They afford no sanction for many of the *doctrines* of the church of Rome. Five out of seven of the *sacraments* of that church are unknown to the sacred volume; and equally unauthorized by it is the *papal hierarchy* itself and all its institutions.

Among the *doctrines* of the church of Rome which more especially stand exposed to the objection, that they have no sanction from the word of God, are the following: purgatory; invocation of saints; penances; auricular confessions; absolutions; indulgences; and the stultifying doctrine of transubstantiation.

With respect to papal institutions, the pope holds his pre-eminence, and large assumptions of power by a very weak and

precarious thread, as it respects the Sacred Scriptures; resting the whole of them on a forced translation of a very small portion of the Divine Word. And the orders and degrees of dignity in the Romish church, such as cardinals, archbishops, deans, archdeacons, priors, abbots, priests, monks, and nuns, invested as they have been, and still are, with secular power and immunities, have absolutely no warrant whatever to be found in the Holy Scriptures.

Not only were the Scriptures themselves unacceptable to the church of Rome, on account of their being hostile to the innovations which that hierarchy has made on the purity of Christianity, and Wickliff's translation of them, most offensive to the dignified clergy; but that Reformer, in his other-writings, most solemnly protested against many of the innovations in question, as being false, erroneous, and anti-christian; and not unfrequently he expressed himself respecting them with a holy and elevated indignation.

In the year 1379, at a time when the right to the papacy was contested by Urban VI. and Clement VII.; and when in fact there were two pretended popes, the former of whom had granted indulgences to promote a war in support of his pretensions; Wickliff, alluding to the banner borne by the pope's partizan's, which was a red cross, or crucifix, exclaims thus: "the seal or banner of Chryst on the cross, that is token of peace, mercy, and charity, for to slee all christen men, for the love of twaie false priests, that hen open anti-chryst, to meyntene their worldly state, to oppress Chrystendom worse than Jewis weren agenst holy writ, and life of Chryst, and his apostles!" In another place he asks, "why wole not the proud priest of Rome," (Urban VI.)

CONG. MAG. NO. 7.

" grant full pardon to all men for to live in peace, and charity, and patience, as he doth to all men to fight and slee christen men?"

Of *transubstantiation* he says, "and damnen we this cursed heresie of Antichrist, and his hypocrites, and worldly priests, saying, that this sacrament is neither bread, ne Chryst's body, but accidents without sujet, and there under is Chryst's body. This is not taught in holy writ, but is fully against St. Austin and holy saints, and reason and wit:" and again; "feeling and tasting, being those of our outward senses which are most to be depended on, the heresy which gives a lye to the testimony thereof, in the sacrament of the eucharist, cannot produce any other sacrament than that of Antichryst."†

Of the authority of scripture he says, it is independent of any other authority, and is preferable to every other writing, but especially to the books of the Church of Rome, of the modern doctors, and the pope's bulls; because the authority of Jesus Christ is infinitely above the authority of all mankind.‡

In no part of Wickliff's writings does he more clearly manifest that on some important points, he had imbibed the sentiments of the English Independent Dissenters of the present day, than in his definition of a *church*. The word church has been explained so variously, and it has been made the powerful instrument of so much mischief in the world, that it cannot but be interesting to have the opinion of our venerable reformed thus expresses, clearly dissenting from that notion of a church, which has been

\* Treatise of Feigned Contemplative Life.

+ Trialogus, lib. iv. cap. 5.

; Trialogus, lib. iii. cap. 30, 31.

3 A

practically maintained, at least, by all hierarchies, and is maintained by them, with different modifications, to the present hour. "Holy Chirche, which is the gostly (spiritual) body of Chryst, is a net which is not yet drawen to the brynk, therefore it hath evil men medlyd (mixed) with good men till the dome (judgment) in which these shall be departed (separated) from them." As parts of this mixed church, he reckons the clergy, secular lords, and commons; "whereas," he observes, "when men spoken of holy chirche, they understanden anon prelates and priests, monks, canons, and freres, and all men that have crowns, (*shaven crowns*), tho' they liven never so cursedly agenst God's law, and clippes (include) not ne holden secular men of holy chirche, tho' they liven never so truly after God's law, and enden in perfect charity: but nevertheless all that shallen be saved in bliss of heaven, ben members of holy chirche, as ben good christen men, that keþeth God's behests."<sup>\*</sup>

Wickliff also declaimed freely against the musical parts of the Romish service, asserting that many of its offices, such as *mattins* and *mass*, and *even-song*, *placebo*, and *dirige*, and *commendation*, and *mattins of our lady*, were "ordained of sinful men, to be sung with high crying, to let (hinder) men from the sentence (sentiment) and understanding of that that was sung, and to maken men weary and undisposed to study God's law."<sup>†</sup>

Against other abuses and corrupt practices of the Romish clergy, he raised his voice, and employed his pen, with an undaunted firmness. The rights of sanctuary, as they were called,

or that protection which the church afforded to criminals of the highest degree, who sought refuge in some consecrated place, which had been invested with that privilege, such as the sanctuary at Westminster, he very justly considered as favouring felons and murderers.

The practice of swearing by saints he brands as idolatry in the following passage: "Lordis and Prelates exciten strongly men to do idolatrye, for they sweren customarily, needlessly, and oft unadvisedly bi the members of God, bi Chryst, and bi sayntes, insomuch that ech lorde and prelate comynly maketh to hym an idle of some seynt, whom he worshypeth more than God. For comenly they sweren by our Lady of Walsingham, Seynt John Baptist, Seynt Edward, Seynt Thomas of Canterbury, and such other seyntis, and chargen (regard) more this ooth, then tho' they sweren by the holy trinitie, and in all things they honouren more these seyntis then they honouren the holy trinitie."<sup>‡</sup>

Many other passages might be adduced, illustrative of the doctrines, piety, fortitude, and clear views of divine truth, of this reformer, and abundantly explanatory of the reasons why he and his writings were so offensive to the clergy of the Romish Church. But there is one extract from his translation of the New Testament,

<sup>\*</sup> It may not be unedifying to protestant readers to be reminded that three centuries of reformation have not wholly obliterated this practice. Swearing by God or by Christ, it may indeed be presumed, is a practice which has long since been rejected from religious circles; but the less intelligible expletives, Oh John! Oh George! or marry it! or sounds! are still occasionally to be met with: they are all, it ought to be recollect, the remnants of popish oaths by St. John, St. George, or the Virgin Mary, and by his wounds, that is, Christ's wounds.

<sup>†</sup> *Of Prelates*, chap. II.

in the 18th chapter of the Gospel of St. John, which demands particular attention. That chapter it will be noted narrates the circumstances of the treachery of Judas, and the apprehension of the Saviour by the servants of the Jewish high-priest. This head of the Jewish church, is designated in the Latin Vulgate *pontifex*, a word sufficiently distinct from *episcopus*, the title by which the order of bishops is known in the church of Rome, and by which the office is expressed in the Vulgate; 1 Tim. iii. 1. Wickliff however, throughout this chapter, renders the word *pontifex*, *bischoppe*, thereby representing the Saviour as having been murdered by the procurement, and to gratify the relentless malice and jealousy of the *bischoppe* of the Jewish church. It must have been obvious to the meanest capacity among the popish clergy, that such a translation was capable of producing in the minds of the multitude an association of ideas, not at all favourable to that veneration for the episcopal order with which it was their aim to inspire every true catholic. Wickliff's translation of the 18th chapter of St. John, in which the word *bishop* occurs ten times, would afford an interesting and entertaining specimen of the English language in his days, as well as illustrate the foregoing observation; but as so large a quotation would extend these remarks to too great a length, the following is offered as a sufficient specimen:—

"Therefore Symound Petir hadde a swerd, and drough it out and smote the servant of the *bisschop*, and kittide of his right eere; and the name of the seruant was Malcus. Therfore Jesus seide to Petir, putte thou thi swerd into thi schethe: wolt thou not that I drynke the cuppe that my fadir ghaf to me? Therfore the

cumpany of knyghtis (soldiers) and the tribune (captain) and the mynystris (officers or servants) of the Jewis toooken Jhesus, and bounden him, and ledden him first to Annas, for he was fadir of Caifas wyf that was *biaschop* of that gheer, and it was Caifas that ghaf counseil to the Jewis that *oo* (one) man die for the peple. But Symound Peter suede (followed after) Jhesus and another disciple; and thilk disciple was knowun to the *bisschop*, and heentride with Jhesus into the halle of the *bischop*. But Petir stood at the dore withoutforth; therefore the tothir disciple that was knowun to the *bisschop* wente out and seide (spoke) to the womman that kepte the dore, and broughte yn Petir. And the damysel kepare of the dore seide to Petir, wher thou art also of this mannys disciplis? He seide, I am not. And the servauntis and mynystris stoonen at the coolis, for it was coold, and warmyden hem: and Petir was with hem stondynge and warminge him. And the *bisschop* axide Jhesus of hisse disciplis and of his techyng." &c. &c. &c. T.

To the Editors.

#### THOUGHTS ON WORLDLY POLICY IN RELIGION.

THE singular and unexpected changes which have lately occurred in the religious affairs of this kingdom, have led me to make some reflections, which I know not where to express so freely as in your pages. Every one has been astonished to observe the sudden paroxysm of missionary zeal, which has seized certain ecclesiastical dignitaries; especially so soon after a vehement and not unsanctioned protest of an Archdeacon; which, considering that he, at the time, was not giving any practical proof of missionary zeal, even in a canonical manner, seemed levelled as much against the object of the

society brought under rebuke, as against its constitution. This sudden transition from apathy to zeal, I confess appeared to me something remarkable.

But I was led also to reflect, that there seems almost as sudden a transition not merely from apathy, but even from hostility, in the cause of public and general education. But a short time since, in every body's recollection, we heard nothing but the din of alarm, lest the lower classes should be overtaught, and the spirit of insurrection be generated, to the great danger of established property and power. Now, we see the most strenuous efforts made by all parties in this same dangerous experiment. The alarmists are most forward in scattering and nourishing those seeds of disaffection and insubordination, which they would have fain destroyed.

A very few years since, the friends of missions were brought into great anxiety for the fate of their operations in India. Their missionaries were prohibited from entering on their labours, and a dark cloud lowered over their benevolent efforts in that part of the empire. There was an evident conspiracy to shut out Christianity from that idolatrous and degraded country. I will not assert, that the same class of persons who endeavoured to rivet the chains of superstition, and "abominable idolatry," on the Hindoos, are now generally active in promoting missionary operations among them: but I think I may say their hostility is much abated; and in some instances I know it is removed, and a share is taken in the work of missions to the east. But it is remarkable, that those who might have been expected to take a prominent part in the defence of missions in that quarter, yet who looked on during the struggle with

apparent unconcern, are now pursuing zealous measures for the conversion of the Hindoos, while the enemies of missions are not heard to lift up their voice.

These recent facts, with others of a similar kind, seem to me to develop a law which appears to regulate the conduct of certain men, and it is this: when a novel plan of doing good to a great extent, is proposed to the world, these persons endeavour by every art in their power to depreciate it, and cry it down, and if possible, to put it down before it takes hold of the public mind. But, if that is found impracticable, they suddenly turn round, and appear very friendly to the object, take it under their own patronage, and appear ready to carry it even further than the first projectors.

This politic device, in my apprehension, wears the mark of antiquity. When the gospel was first promulgated, and for several ages after, it met with the fiercest opposition from the great and the wise of this world. "Rase it, rase it even to the foundation," was the universal cry. At length, when all hope of extermination was lost, a friendly hand was stretched forth. Suddenly the despised gospel became a favourite with the great; and the "reproach of Christ" was lost amid the splendours and the favours of a court. Which was the gainer by this sudden transition, the world or the church, I shall leave to the reflection of your readers; but to me the law appears the same in the one case as in the others.

I think it is generally admitted by christians and divines, that Satan, the enemy of the church, attempts to accomplish its subversion, either by force or by stratagem. From this acknowledged and notorious feature in his policy, are we not warranted in attributing to his suggestions

that course which has been and is now pursued by the men of the world towards the zealous followers of Christ? And from a review of the destructive effects to "pure and undefiled religion," which an alliance of the professed church of Christ, with the powers of the world, has ever produced, is it uncharitable to surmise, that those attempts to combine the "pomps and vanities of the world," with a profession of missionary, zeal, which have lately commenced among us, have their origin as much in the counsels of the "prince of this world," as in those of the "men of the world?" We know Satan can transform himself into "an angel of light," when it will suit his purpose; and no doubt if any good *must* be done in the world, it will be his object to get the management of it into his own hands. It would be mere affectation to profess to be "ignorant of his devices" in this matter, with history and scripture before us.

How delightful, however, is it to think that "our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ," watches over his gospel and his church with an unslumbering eye. "He maketh these devices of none effect." While "the wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth, the Lord will not deliver him into his hand." Nothing can eventually be done against the truth, but every thing, whether intended or not, must be for the truth. Jehovah reigneth. He can bring light out of darkness, peace out of confusion. He maketh both the wrath and the cunning of man to praise him. The one "he restrains;" the other "he takes in its own craftiness." He will guide the vessel which he has launched; he will waft it to the desired haven, though all the hydras of the deep should raise the tempest, or the syren song strive to lull into a

fatal repose. The policy of Satan and of this world, will eventually be overruled; and, doubtless, both will be astonished at last, to find that they have been unconsciously forwarding that very cause which they designed to crush.

How necessary that all our motives of action in the cause of God, should be exactly scrutinised, and accord with his holy will! And how calmly may those await the issue of every contest, who are "on the Lord's side!"

SPECULATOR.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING RELIGION AMONG SEAMEN.

THE ocean, which, to a superficial observer, appears to divide the nations, and by its mountainous billows to raise an insuperable barrier to their intercourse, is, in fact, a wonderful medium of communication between them; an element that unites the most distant portions of the human race, and serves to bring them to a knowledge of each other. By means of this immense flood that covers two-thirds of the entire surface of the globe, we share in the productions of every country and clime; the mutual wants of nations are relieved, their respective advantages are exchanged, the arts and discoveries of each communicated, and blessings of the highest order,—those of religious knowledge, may be extended to the inhabitants of the remotest regions.

The most astonishing circumstance in nautical history, and the most important to mankind, is the invention of the mariner's compass; in regard to the author of which there is considerable uncertainty. Some writers have, indeed, contended that it is no new discovery, and was not unknown in the time of Solomon. It is utterly incredible, say they, that

without the knowledge of this necessary instrument, merchants should have sent ships to Tarshish, Ophir, and Parvaim, which last they determine to be Peru ! They suppose that Job refers to the loadstone by the name of topaz, or *the stone that turns itself*; and maintain that it was impossible for the ancients to be acquainted with the attractive virtues of the magnet, and be at the same time ignorant of its polarity. But it is difficult to conceive how such a discovery, if once possessed, could have been lost; and equally difficult is it to conceive, since we have very many ancient writings still remaining, how the loadstone should have been known, and in common use, while neither poets nor prophets, nor historians, make any allusion to it. In the absence of evidence on the part of antiquity, it must be admitted, that the mariner's compass is a modern invention; and it is quite certain it was not in common use in navigation before the fourteenth century.

No acquisition had ever more influence on the commerce, the civilization, and destinies of nations. For ages men had only been able in their frail barks to creep along the coast, not losing sight of land, or to thread their way among icelets that gem the neck of the sea : now the mariner, venturing to spread his sails to the wind on the immeasurable ocean, triumphs on that element which bears him to the most distant quarters of the globe, with an ease and rapidity, that voyagers tell us, resemble the transitions of a dream. The discovery was made too, at a time when Europe began to awake from her long slumber, and when she had something of value to communicate, as well as much to acquire. The coincidence of such events can originate only in the wise combinations of Providence. To ad-

vert to the history of our own country; the maritime greatness of Britain is not to be attributed simply to her insular situation. It is mainly to be traced to that insuppressible love of liberty, and the great principles of the reformed religion, which gave so mighty an impulse to our nation in gloriously resisting and annihilating the most formidable armament that ever covered the ocean,—the Spanish Armada; vainly styled invincible. The marine of England may be said to have commenced its reign with this splendid achievement; and it is with reason that the ablest writers have attributed its formation and growth, as well as that of the Dutch, to events produced by the reformation. In relation to the interests of a maritime and commercial nation in particular, and indeed of the world in general, we can hardly rate too highly the importance of seamen. And yet, to our shame it must be stated, they have been deplorably disregarded in our own country, if not despised.

With respect to the most momentous of all subjects, their spiritual welfare, they have been more than neglected. Our obligations to them, which we seem to have forgotten, are numerous beyond all calculation. They were, above all others, instrumental in the preservation of the protestant religion, the distinguishing advantages of which, with singular injustice, we have afforded them but little opportunity to enjoy ! To them, under God, we owe our illustrious marine, which has given us the dominion of the ocean. To them we are indebted for our colonial possessions; for our empire in the west and east, which, for magnitude and splendour, are unparalleled in the history of the world. Seamen are the hands and feet of the great commercial body,

without whose services the profoundest speculations of the wisest head would bring no returns of profit, and were no better than the dreams of folly. If the inhabitants of the different quarters of the globe are in effect tributaries to the British Isles ; if the fruits of the most delicious climes, the produce of the most exuberant countries, the riches of the most distant mines, contribute to our wealth, our luxury, our gratification ; if the treasures of both the Indies have been poured in upon our shores ; do we not owe these advantages to an order of men, who, by a strange oversight both of policy and benevolence, have been left to appear among us as a kind of outcasts of society, in circumstances of extreme degradation and misery, both natural and moral ? But for them we might long ago have been a prey to our enemies ; and they have more than once saved the country by their prowess. And do we owe them nothing in return ? We say *once* them. For to minister to their necessities, can hardly be considered as beneficence. In all the relations of men, the link which binds together the different members of the community, from the highest to the most subordinate, is a sense of mutual wants and dependence, and to repay good with good, is but an act of retributive justice.

Is it said that much has been done for them by the Committee formed for the relief of distressed seamen ? This we ought to have done, and doubtless should have done, if they had been only so many sentient pieces of flesh and blood ; or if, instead of being bipeds, wearing the human form, they were only so many serviceable brutes thrown on our humanity. What have we done to arrest their progress in brutalization, or to 'graft on' their physical powers (which it

seems we know how to appreciate) the nobler qualities of man, as an intellectual and religious being ? We have not been absolutely insensible to their bodily distresses ; but it is the informing mind,—the undying principle within,—that properly constitutes the MAN. Why must we forget that sailors have souls, and must share with us in the destinies of eternity ? We may be told that their *spiritual* interests have not been forgotten ; that, to say nothing of the object of the Naval and Military Bible Society, a distinct Institution has been formed, to provide merchant seamen with the Holy Scriptures. We rejoice in it, and trust that its beneficent exertions will not be without success. Its operations, however, can be but partial ; nor does it embrace, in itself, the whole of the means which God has determined to employ for the propagation of the religion of Jesus among all ranks of men. The distribution of the written word is subsidiary to the PREACHING of the gospel,—but that it can never supersede its living and oral ministration, is a position so plain, that it is needless to enter on its proof. Though we had given men the Bible in their own tongue, the commission of our Lord would yet remain to be fulfilled, "Preach the gospel to every creature." Seamen are particularly isolated, and, of all descriptions of men, have least intercourse with the religious world. By being confined for so considerable a part of their lives to ships, where christianity is seldom taught, and but little practised, they are placed under peculiar disadvantages. Numbers of men crowded together, are sure to corrupt one another ; and especially when employed in the horrid work of war, their demoralization is accelerated to an awful degree. For skill and

bravery, they have been called the glory of Britain; we wish it could not be added, that for profligracy they have been her shame. The name of "floating hells," given to our ships of war, is, we fear, too justly descriptive of some of them, and marks the unrestrained depravity and blasphemy of their inmates. Even in times of peace, and when in port, it is exceedingly rare that sailors are brought into contact with the means of grace. Their maritime life, the habits which they have formed, too tenacious to be worn away by a short and occasional residence on shore, and their technical phraseology, separate them from the other classes of society. They are not in their element in company with landsmen; and, if they sometimes enter our places of worship, granting there is room, they are not, perhaps, respectfully accommodated, but rather looked upon as a sort of wild animals, more likely to prevent the edification of others, than to be edified themselves. In short, there is no order of men who stand more in need of distinct provision for their religious instruction, by means more attractive, and specifically adapted to them.

From the neglect with which they have been treated, it might be imagined that religion was unnecessary to seamen. But if we could fix on one class to whom it is needful, above all others, are not *they* the persons, who, besides the dangers of life incident to all, are obnoxious to the most formidable elements, and the most fearful accidents, and who live among storms and shipwrecks? If it behoves all men to be *ready*, should not *they* have eternity before their eyes, who are exposed to more deaths than others, and are less likely to have time for deliberate reflection, or to have

the offices of religion administered to them in their last agonies? These men have braved the rigors of every climate, and some of them have navigated almost every ocean; but, however great their nautical skill, they remain to be instructed, as to the eventful voyage of human life;—to be prepared for its uncertainties and dangers, which are as real as any they have encountered on the agitated deep,—apt image of a present world. Ignorant, inconsiderate, violent in their passions, reckless of evil, they have embarked on this sea, and, lulled by the flatteries of hope, dream every wind and star their own. However variously they shape their course, they are drifting, in spite of themselves, towards the gulph of eternity, that swallows up all generations. Meanwhile, they are exposed to storms from above, and to rocks which lie concealed beneath; to adverse winds, and thwarting currents; to various illusions, even by day; and to false lights by night,—so often fatal to unsuspecting mariners. How necessary that they should know their latitude,—that they should frequently try their soundings, and find their bearings and distance. Let us, then, provide them with the chart of divine knowledge, with the compass of faith, that points to the pole-star of truth, and the sheet-anchor of christian hope. Let us tell them of a Pilot of infinite skill, acquainted with all their hidden dangers; one whom the winds and waves obey, and at whose mighty bidding there shall be "a great calm." Let us point them to the light of the gospel—that great PHAROS of the moral world, which warns them of those rocks and shoals on which so many thousands have been wrecked and lost.

In communicating the knowl-

ledge of religion to seamen, the salvation of their souls is the first object; the melioration of their character, which will improve them as servants of the public, and subjects of the state, is a second. They are virtually connected with our national prosperity, and by making them better men, the interests of society will be promoted and secured. At all times in mercantile affairs, our property is necessarily intrusted to them; and in war they are armed for the defence of our liberties and lives. It is true they are inferior to none of their fellow subjects in integrity, patriotism, and loyalty. These virtues, however, can be considered as secure only when under the influence of religious principle. A regard even to self-interest, may, in some instances, stimulate men to the discharge of social and public duties. The sanctions of law, and the regulations of discipline, may prevent those overflows of wickedness which threaten to disorganize society; but they leave the springs

of action unrenewed, while the evil works with undiminished virulence in the heart, which if called forth by extraordinary circumstances may be alarming in its effects. It is religion only that makes men truly conscientious; and the fear of God insures probity and integrity towards man, subordination to legal authority, and a regard to the sanctity of oaths. The mutiny at the Nore, is an event fearfully memorable in British annals. In such perilous times, which we trust will never return, ordinary virtues and attachments fail. The infusion of the principle of genuine religion into our marine, is the proper and efficient preventive. In regard both to the most important mercantile trusts, and in the most critical conjunctures of public affairs, we feel ourselves safe in the hands of men who possess qualities which render them proper objects of confidence, the want of which has long been felt in the marine of Britain.

(To be continued.)

## REVIEW OF BOOKS.

*Iceland ; or, the Journal of a Residence in that Island during the years 1814 and 1815. Containing observations on the natural phenomena, history, literature, and antiquities of the island ; and the religion, character, manners, and customs of its inhabitants.* By Ebenezer Henderson. 2 Vols. 8vo. London. Hamilton, 1818.

ICELAND is beyond all question or comparison the most extraordinary spot on the surface of the globe. The severest and most awful visitations of the fiercest elements of nature have laid waste this devoted land, this *triste bidental*, in tempests, floods of fiery lava, and torrents of boiling water thrown up by the force and expansion of fire raging in the bowels of the earth. The landscape—if we may venture to apply a term which commonly presents either gay and smiling, or rich and magnificent images—displays a dreary scene of almost unvarying desolation: ice-mountains, rugged, precipitous, and cavernous lavas, tracts of sulphureous soil, moors, bogs,

cauldrons and fountains of scalding mud, springs and jets of steam and boiling water, are the objects which incessantly meet the eye, and appal the mind. According to the calculation of Sir George Mackenzie, not less than 60,000 square miles, in one continued surface, have been subjected to the action of volcanic fire.

It might be supposed that so wild and waste a tract would have been abandoned by mankind; or that, at least, nothing more than scattered or transient habitations would, at any period, have presented themselves to the traveller; but it appears, on the contrary, that there was a time when Iceland was prosperous, and well-peopled, when liberty and science flourished amid her wastes, and when cultivation prevailed to a very considerable extent, where at present the very possibility of it has ceased. The discovery and settlement of Iceland, took place in the ninth century, and the Norwegians who first made it their abode, carried with them their

CONG. MAG. No. 7.

3 B

laws, their customs, and their superstitions. The oppressions of Harald Harfager, King of Norway, added such numbers to the new settlers, that in little more than half a century all the coasts of the island were occupied; it will, however, somewhat diminish the surprise which our readers may probably feel at this circumstance, when they learn that at this period, Iceland presented a far less cheerless and repulsive aspect than at present. Many extensive tracts which are now covered with sand and lava, were then adorned with flourishing woods, or rich with successful cultivation. In the year 928, the various communities into which the population had been till then divided, adopted a common system of government, on the republican plan. The island was divided into four departments, each under the direction of its own magistrate, elected by the free suffrage of the people; these departments were again divided into sections, with each its presiding officer, whose duty extended both to the judicial and ecclesiastical functions; these sections were sub-divided into districts, over which the *Hreppstiori*, or bailiff, presided; his office principally regarded the management of the poor, and the decision of inferior causes. Through all these courts a system of appeals was established, which terminated in the *Althing*, or general assembly of the nation, held annually, under the presidency of a chief magistrate, who bore the honourable title of *Logsgusnadr*,—publisher of the law. This admirable constitution lasted till 1263, when the island became tributary to Norway, still retaining its laws and liberties, though compelled to surrender its independence. At the present time, a somewhat similar system is, in general form at least, in exercise, with the substitution of a governor, and a supreme court of justice, in the place of the venerable *Althing*, and its president. The population of Iceland was formerly very considerable, but the plague and the small-pox have made such ravages, as to reduce it to the average number of 50,000.

In literature, the Icelanders have always maintained a respectable rank. While the continental nations were sunk in gross darkness and ignorance, poetry and history were cultivated with success by the inhabitants of this sequestered spot; the first Norwegian settlers brought with them the traditional tales of other years, and other lands, and in the eight months' inaction of an Iceland winter, they had few other sources of enjoyment than those which arose from social intercourse, and the recitation of their *Sagas*, or poetical

annals, or legends. Into these, no doubt, much of fiction was permitted to enter; but the main substance of the narrative was usually founded on facts. Of these, and the other parts of Icelandic science, Mr. Henderson has given interesting elucidations.

The religion of Iceland was, as we have already stated, originally heathenism; and when this was superseded by Christianity, it was scarcely more than the extirpation of one set of errors, by the introduction of another: the change from the multiplied deities of paganism, to the polytheism of popery, is comparatively slight, and the easy expiations of the first, accord admirably with the *opus operatum* of the latter. During the long period of five centuries, were the Icelanders fettered by the most abject of superstitions; distant as they were from the centre of error, it lost none of its delusions by the length of its journey; its sway, on the contrary, seemed to derive a greater force, and a more aggravated oppression, from the very circumstance by which it might have been expected to be diminished. At length the protestant religion was established among these remote regions, in a way which we very cordially disapprove, however we may rejoice in the result,—by the interference of the secular arm. Christiern III. King of Denmark and Norway, himself a protestant, deemed it good and right that his subjects should be of the same way of thinking with himself, and accordingly established the Lutheran forms; it should, however, be observed, in justice to this monarch, that as far as the clergy were concerned, their ambition and turbulence fully justified him in the steps which he took to deprive them of their influence and authority. At present Iceland is regulated, in ecclesiastical affairs, if we understand Mr. Henderson aright, strictly upon the Lutheran plan; though we cannot help suspecting some error here, since the Icelandic clergy are under the control of a bishop, and if we are not mistaken, the Lutheran scheme does not acknowledge that office. The livings are, of course, very poor, but the greater part of the clergy discharge their duty with exemplary fidelity, and exercise a very close and constant inspection into the characters and conduct of their parishioners. In general they are sound in doctrine, and decidedly evangelical in their personal views and feelings, and in their public ministrations; but there are, unhappily, a few among them who appear to be wretchedly tainted with the semi-deistical principles of Socinianism. Several editions of the Bible had, at different periods, been printed for the use of the Icelanders,

but, from various causes, they had nearly disappeared; numbers had, for years, been vainly endeavouring to secure a copy of the Sacred Oracles, and as they were far too poor to obviate the difficulty by printing a new edition, they had begun almost to despair, when that noblest of human institutions, the Bible Society, interfered, and has by this time distributed throughout the island a large and universally accessible supply. In order effectually to ascertain the state of religion in that country, and the degree in which the want of Bibles was felt, Mr. Henderson was deputed by the Parent Society to make inquiries on the spot; and, in the volumes before us, he has communicated the results of his examination in language, manly, perspicuous, and forcible, and for which the modest apology in his preface was altogether unnecessary. We have, indeed, perused his most interesting work with feelings of unmixed delight; we attend the excellent and accomplished author on no romantic course, no ramble of restlessness, or idle curiosity, nor even on the noble quest of science,—but on an embassy of love, a journey of pure and disinterested benevolence, fraught with unspeakable blessings to generations yet unborn. At the same time, Mr. Henderson has conferred obligations upon science; he has observed the natural productions, the strange and unusual phenomena of the island, and the peculiar characteristics of its inhabitants, with a keen and observant eye; he was well furnished for his journey in intellectual acquisition, and without the affectation of science, he is evidently a scientific man. His volumes are replete with information, and are, in most respects, a model of that particular kind of composition to which they belong; it is an additional recommendation that they are not published in the usual expensive and ostentatious form, but on a moderate and accessible plan. We regret that although disposed to assign a large space to the analysis of its contents, we are restricted by our limits, to a rapid and superficial survey.

In the evening of July the 15th, 1814, Mr. Henderson landed at Reykiavik, the capital of Iceland, consisting of a few wooden houses; and, judging from the description, and from the plate in Sir George Mackenzie's travels, considerably inferior, in point of comfort and appearance, to many third rate villages in England. On landing, the visitors were "met by a crowd of men, women, and children, who filled the air with the exclamations, 'Peace, come in peace; the Lord bless you.'" Mr. Henderson was very cordially welcomed by the bishop, and the ecclesiastical au-

thorities, and received every promise of assistance in his labour of love; he was, however, exceedingly mortified to find that he had just missed the *Handels-tid*, or period of traffic, during which the Icelanders resort to Reykiavik, for purposes of trade. We cannot refrain from expressing our astonishment that he was not previously aware of this circumstance, since the nature of the *Handels*, and its date had been distinctly stated by Sir George Mackenzie, with whose work Mr. Henderson appears to be familiar. Having unfortunately lost this golden opportunity, Mr. Henderson resolved on travelling round the coast, that, as he states it,

"I might have it in my power to ascertain the actual wants of the people in a spiritual point of view; leave copies as specimens on passing along; visit the different sea-ports, to which copies of the Scriptures had been forwarded from Copenhagen, and make the necessary arrangements with the merchants and others for their circulation in the vicinity; and especially, as there was reason to hope, that, by the blessing of God on my conversation with such of the clergy as should fall in my way, I might be the humble instrument of stirring them up to greater diligence and zeal in the work of the Lord, by informing them of the present appearances with respect to religion abroad, the lively interest which Christians of all denominations take in its diffusion, and the energetic and successful means employed by them for that purpose. Their entire exclusion, by invincible local circumstances, from almost all access to the sources of religious intelligence, has a necessary tendency to engender a partial coldness and indifference about the common interests of the gospel, and to render this part of the vineyard of Christ which they occupy, frigid and barren as the island they inhabit. A visit from a stranger, especially one who travelled among them with the end I had in view, would, it was presumed, excite a more lively concern about the Holy Scriptures, and thus contribute to advance the cause of pure and undefiled religion." p. 17, 18.

Accordingly, on the 26th of July, he set out, in company with Captain Von Scheel, a Danish officer, employed in surveying the coasts; and as there is nothing resembling a regular road throughout the island, their only mode of conveyance for themselves and their baggage, was by employing the strong, sure-footed, native horses. Their route lay directly across the island, in a northerly direction, through uninhabited tracts of sand, lava, and volcanic mountains. At midnight, after their first day's journey, they reached the lake of Thingvalla, and with some difficulty succeeded in rousing the inhabitants of a cottage, after clambering over the roof, and forcing open a door; it might have been expected that the tenants would be in

no very gentle mood at so unseasonable a disturbance. They behaved, however, with the utmost courtesy, and assisted the travellers to the utmost of their power; they were miserably poor, and received a Bible with the liveliest expressions of gratitude and joy. So clear are the summer nights in these high latitudes, that Mr. Henderson, a little before two o'clock, could distinctly read the 103d Psalm in his small pocket Bible. After crossing a tremendous chasm, not less than 180 feet deep, and nearly as many wide, by stepping from rock to rock down its precipitous and broken sides, they reached *Thingvalla*, formerly, and during a space of nearly nine hundred years, the spot where the *Allthing*, or great council of the nation, was held. "It accordingly holds a conspicuous place in all the Sagas, or ancient traditional accounts, and is peculiarly worthy of notice, on account of its being the spot where the Christian religion was publicly acknowledged in the year 1000, a decision which was hastened by the following circumstance.—While the heathen, and those who professed Christianity, were engaged in all the ardour of dispute, a messenger came running into the assembly with the intelligence, that subterraneous fire had broken out in the district of Olfus, and that it threatened the mansion of the high priest Thoroddr. On hearing this, the heathen exclaimed, 'Can it be matter of surprise that the gods should be angry at such speeches?' To which Snorri Godi, an advocate of the Christians, replied, by as pointed a question, 'At what were the gods angry, then, at the period when the very lava on which we now stand was burning?' The force of the argument was felt; the assembly adjourned for that day; and when they met again, an act was passed for the abolition of all public acts of idolatry, and the introduction of Christianity, as the authorised religion" p. 24, 25.

The scenery is wild and awful beyond description; at one place, Mr. Henderson discovered half burnt bones and ashes, which marked it as the spot where many a wretch had suffered at the stake for the alleged crime of sorcery; females convicted of child murder, were drowned in a neighbouring river; and on an island in the same stream, other criminals were beheaded. They were now approaching the peculiar wonder of Iceland, the *Geyser*, or boiling fountains; for a full and most interesting description of which, we must refer to Mr. Henderson's first volume. Of these extraordinary springs, the two principal are the Great and the New Geyser, or *Ragers*, as they are explained by Mr. Henderson; and in various directions are a great number of smaller apertures, from which jets of different height and force are thrown up at unequal intervals. The basin of the great Geyser is irregularly circular, and about fifty feet

in diameter, averaging a depth of about four feet; the fountain is thrown up from a pipe in the centre, about ten feet in diameter, and seventy-eight feet in perpendicular depth. The interior of the basin is covered with a "whitish siliceous incrustation," worn to smoothness by the action of the water; and in all directions round the spring, are to be found the most beautiful specimens of "siliceous efflorescence, rising in small granular clusters, which bear the most striking resemblance to the heads of cauliflower." The play of this extraordinary fountain is thus described by Mr. Henderson:—

"As I returned from the neighbouring hill, I heard reports which were both louder and more numerous than any of the preceding, and exactly resembled the distant discharge of a park of artillery. Concluding, from these circumstances, that the long expected wonders were about to commence, I ran to the mound, which shook violently under my feet, and I had scarcely time to look into the basin, when the fountain exploded, and instantly compelled me to retire to a respectful distance on the windward side. The water rushed up out of the pipe with amazing velocity, and was projected by irregular jets into the atmosphere, surrounded by immense volumes of steam, which, in a great measure, hid the column from the view. The first four or five jets were inconsiderable, not exceeding fifteen or twenty feet in height; these were followed by one about fifty feet, which was succeeded by two or three considerably lower; after which, came the last, exceeding all the rest in splendour, which rose at least to the height of seventy feet. The large stones which we had previously thrown into the pipe, were ejaculated to a great height, especially one, which was thrown much higher than the water. On the propulsion of the jets, they lifted up the water in the basin near the orifice of the pipe to the height of a foot, or a foot and a half, and, on the falling of the column, it not only caused the basin to overflow at the usual channels, but forced the water over the highest part of the brim, behind which I was standing. The great body of the column (at least ten feet in diameter) rose perpendicularly, but was divided into a number of the most superb curvated ramifications; and several smaller sproutings were severed from it, and projected in oblique directions, to the no small danger of the spectator, who is apt to get scalded, ere he is aware, by the falling jet." p. 42, 43.

The New Geyser, or *Strokkur*, as it is called by the natives, differs from the preceding, both in its appearance, and in its exercise; it has no basin, and the orifice of the pipe is level with the ground. Mr. Henderson first witnessed the explosion of this fountain at an early hour in the morning.

"It is scarcely possible, however, to give any idea of the brilliancy and grandeur of the scene

which caught my eye on drawing aside the curtain of my tent. From an orifice, nine feet in diameter, which lay directly before me, at the distance of about an hundred yards, a column of water, accompanied with prodigious volumes of steam, was erupted with inconceivable force, and a tremendously roaring noise, to varied heights, of from fifty to eighty feet, and threatened to darken the horizon, though brightly illuminated by the morning sun. During the first quarter of an hour, I found it impossible to move from my knees, on which I had raised myself, but poured out my soul in solemn adoration of the Almighty Author of nature, to whose control all her secret movements and terrifying operations are subject:—‘ who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; who toucheth the hills, and they smoke.’ ”\* p. 48, 49.

On the morning of their departure, the party had the high and rare gratification of seeing these two magnificent fountains exert themselves at the same time; and a very interesting plate (which with a little more skilful management, would have been beautiful) is given of this glorious scene. At a subsequent visit Mr. Henderson witnessed the ejection of the waters of the Great Geyser, to the height of 150 feet, and discovered “the key to Strocker,” by the application of which he could make “that beautiful spring, play” at pleasure, “and throw its water to nearly double the height observable in its natural eruptions.” This “key” consisted in throwing a great number of loose stones into the pipe; it should, however, be observed, that Mr. Henderson only tried the experiment twice; and on referring to Sir George Mackenzie’s work, we find that when he tried the same experiment with the Great Geyser, no other effect was produced than “a violent ebullition.” After passing through the dreary tract to the west of the Arnarfell Yokul, an immense ice-mountain, as the word *Yokul* implies, he reached the cultivated district which borders on the Eyaford, a considerable inlet on the northern coast; and here we must find room for a different scene from that we have just quitted; and if the manifestations of God’s creative power “be glory,” “much more” do the wonders of the new creation “exceed in glory.” Mr. Henderson had sent for two of the poorest persons in the neighbourhood of his halting-place, and presented each with a Testament; one of them, he says,

“ Thanked me repeatedly, with tears in his eyes, and rode home quite overjoyed at the gift he had received. The other, a young man about nineteen, had been despatched by his poor and aged parents, to learn the truth of the message

that had been sent them. There was an uncommon degree of humble simplicity in his countenance. On receiving the Testament, it was hardly possible for him to contain his joy. As a number of people had now collected round the door of my tent, I caused him to read the third chapter of the Gospel of John. He had scarcely begun, when they all sat down, or knelt on the grass, and listened with the most devout attention. As he proceeded, the tears began to trickle down their cheeks, and they were all seemingly much affected. The scene was doubtless as new to them as it was to me; and, on my remarking, after he had done, what important instructions were contained in the portion of Scripture he had read, they gave their assent, adding, with a sigh, that they were but too little attended to. The landlady especially seemed deeply impressed with the truth she had heard, and remained some time after the others were gone, together with an aged female, who every now and then broke out into exclamations of praise to God, for having sent ‘ his clear and pure word’ among them. It is impossible for me to describe the pleasure I felt on this occasion. I forgot all the fatigues of travelling over the mountains; and, indeed, to enjoy another such evening, I could travel twice the distance.” p. 79, 80.

But we must restrain ourselves; we could willingly devote a very large space to this most interesting work, but our limits are not equal to our wishes, and we must, for the present, suspend our observations and extracts.

(To be continued.)

*On the Punishment of Death, in the Case of Forgery; its Injustice and Impolicy maintained.* Price 1s. T. Hamilton, Paternoster-row. 1818.

ENGLISH jurisprudence seems, at the present moment, to stand in a critical situation, and one which does not fail to interest every generous mind. Overawed and overborne by her present masters, she reluctantly sets her hand to the most rigorous and the most sanguinary orders, while weeping and supplicating she stretches forth her hands to the friends of humanity and sound policy, imploring speedy deliverance from captivity; her cries have resounded along our coasts, and have called forth the sympathies and the exertions of the wise and good. Another ardent friend of man has sprung up, roused by the imperious call, to plead the cause of injured humanity and outraged policy. The law respecting the crime of forgery, he denounces as unjust and impolitic. Unjust, because it visits the crime with a heavier punishment than it deserves; and assumes an authority over human life, which belongs to no law or government except that of God himself. And even under the divine government

\* Psalm civ. 32.

among the Jews, he shows, that the punishment was so proportioned to the offence, that the crime of *theft* was, in no case, visited with the ultimate and extreme penalty of **DEATH**. He affirms that "forgery in its utmost latitude is but *theft*," and argues, therefore, that death, in such a case, is the infliction of a *disproportionate* and *unjust* punishment.

His next point is to show the *impolicy* of that law which is itself unjust. He grounds it on the axiom that "whatever is contrary to the will of God, must be injurious to man;" and he observes, "I am ashamed to think that in a country calling itself Christian, it should be necessary to discuss this point at all; for the question of right being decided in the negative, that of policy ought not to have a hearing."

Many besides our author will blush at this flagrant disagreement between good principles and bad practice. He pleads both with warmth and strength, however, in a good cause, combating some of the most inveterate prejudices or errors, which have fastened the stigma of cruelty on our criminal code.

"It is said that this is a commercial country; true, it is; but does the particular mode in which property is transferred, alter the nature of the property itself? Commerce, in all its ramifications, is but a mode of transferring property with greater facility: property is still property, in unincreased value; and life is still life, in undiminished importance. Let us beware that in trafficking with property, we do not traffic with blood: this I fear, may this I am sure, is what we have been doing in time past, and, to our shame be it spoken, it is what we are doing to the present day! And if, which I entirely deny, the commercial interests of this country are such as can be guarded only by the sacrifice of *life* for the crime of forgery; let the fathomless depths of the ocean receive and hide them. We are making commerce our God: we are bowing down before it, like the worshippers of Juggernaut to their grim and bloody idol; and our moral character, as a nation, is crushed beneath its wheels; while we are offering human victims as a propitiatory sacrifice.

"Life then is infinitely more than an equivalent for property; and, more than an equivalent in apportioning punishment to crime, it is palpable injustice to require. I add only, though the remark is almost needless, that it is not in the power of man to alter either the nature of property, or the nature of crime: property is still the same, though it be the idol of the world; and forgery is still but theft, though it were to be punished with death to the end of time." p. 11, 12.

Adverting to the manifest insufficiency of the law in this case, he says:—

"Every endeavour to rule a people, and prevent the commission of crime, by the infliction

of punishment, which is disproportionate in degree, or such as in kind is unauthorized by God; must fail of its object; and would we see how He writes folly on such attempts, let us read it in the notorious inefficacy of the punishment of death to stop the crime of forgery. The fact is universally admitted, and every additional execution fatally confirms it.\* The legislative enactments against this crime wholly fail of their intended effect; and thus its practical ineffectiveness bears out the truth of the proposition—that what is unjust must necessarily be unwise.

"If then there exists no right in the government of this country to punish forgery with death, it ought to be abandoned instantly and for ever; and if, in addition to this, there is not even the inducement of worldly policy and expediency, miserable as such a motive would be, it is madness to persevere.

"But drowning men will catch at straws; and it has been said again and again, in excuse for every successive execution,—if pardon be extended now, all persons who have suffered heretofore have been unjustly put to death. The objection is folly itself. How, in the name of common sense, can the extension of mercy now, have a retro-active effect on the execution of a former criminal? If that execution were just then, it will be just for ever; if it was unjust then, it must remain so for ever. What is it, in truth, but multiplying crime to justify crime. Repeat the law, and then these tender consciences will find repose. I really lament the feebleness of words to express the contempt that is due to such an objection.

"Before I pass on to the question of humanity, I must observe that the inefficacy of the existing law to restrain the crime of forgery, is mainly to be attributed to its excessive severity. Numerous as are the victims whose lives are forfeited, they bear but a small proportion to the number of those whom humanity suffers to escape. Men, who in the bosom of their families tenderly cherish all the charities of life, shrink with horror when they find that no punishment can be inflicted short of death. The crime, therefore, is frequently overlooked on account of the horrible consequences of conviction; death or impunity being the only alternative. The necessary result is, that the guilty go free, and the injured have no redress. The severity of the law works in this way great injustice. But the punishment of the guilty is not even the chief object of a wise legislature; the prevention of crime ought primarily to be kept in view: and when shall we learn that excessive severity is not the way to prevent crime. Man is by nature cruel; he has no idea of repressing crime in any other way than by violence; but crime never was, and never can be so repressed." p. 13, 14, 15.

Anticipating the experiment of greater severity, which, as it has been more than whispered, is even now in-

\* I remember an instance of a young man, who, having witnessed the death of four persons for forgery, actually went from the place of execution to commit the same offence; for which he was tried, and convicted at the next sessions.

tended, the author proceeds to state some heart-rending facts, which he concludes by observing : "we glory in our constitution, and boast of our laws—*here is physic for our pride.*"

His statement and his views respecting the impotence of the crown in the case of a conviction for forgery, ought to be read by all :

" In the dreadful combination of misery attendant upon our present system, one of the most appalling considerations is this ; that every avenue to mercy is closed against the wretched victim. This is the fact, and the country has a right to know by whom : till some one stands forward as the responsible adviser of these sanguinary measures, it is in some degree involved in obscurity ; but much is already known ; for were a petition, imploring mercy, and setting forth a detail of circumstances, such as command the feelings of every mind, in which feeling lives, to reach the hands of the Prince Regent ; what would be the result ? He is not an absolute monarch ; he has no will independent of his ministers ; he cannot gratify his own wishes ; he feels, pities, desires to save ; he would rejoice to spare the life ; but he cannot do it without the approbation of his ministers : the next application is to them ; but it is an invariable rule with them, never to listen to any recommendation of mercy, unsupported by the Bank of England : to the Bank then it is referred ; but they too have a rule to which they as inflexibly adhere, never to sanction any such request ; they may express a feeble wish indeed, that the government would adopt some other mode of punishment ; but as it is, they can do nothing : the case had been maturely considered before trial, and was then deemed a fit object for capital prosecution : and by whom had it been considered ? probably by their solicitor : and not even, as it should seem, by him personally ; other engagements may make that impossible, and therefore a clerk in his office may attend to that department. If this, or any thing like this, in any part of the system, be fact, the conclusion is most awful. The Bank dare not execute all, or even the majority of offenders : numerous as these executions are, they bear but a small proportion to the great body of delinquents : the selection is made by the Bank, possibly by a person in the service of their solicitor, who has therefore a discretionary power of determining who shall live, and who shall die ; but it must be natural for him, as for all persons in such a situation, to keep primarily in view the satisfaction of his employers ; and the fact of a conviction, is full proof of his diligence. A case in which conviction may be obtained without much difficulty, may therefore be preferable to one less easily established ; and when a conviction has once taken place, the sound of mercy is never heard ; for the intervention of mercy would be an impeachment of the discretion originally exercised in the selection of proper objects of a capital prosecution and punishment. The duty of pursuing crime, and the privilege of extending mercy, ought not to meet in the same bosom, and it was never

intended they should ; but by the present system they do. The prerogative of mercy, that brightest ornament of the monarch's crown, is fallen from it ; and there is left him only the painful duty of affixing his signature to the order for execution. The representatives of the crown on the circuits, the judges of the land, do sometimes spare, and frequently too, the lives of those convicted of forgery ; but when is the crown itself known to spare. Does any man doubt that if Vartie had been tried in the country, his life would have been saved ? The privilege which the city of London exclusively possesses, that none shall there be executed without the express sanction of the crown, as being the fountain of mercy, seems really to have been the fatal cause of excluding him from that mercy. How, and why is this?" p. 24—27.

We shall make but one more extract, not doubting that our selections will sufficiently recommend the pamphlet itself to the perusal of most of our readers. The author makes the following solemn reflection in concluding his remarks :—

" If forgery be a crime which cannot justly be visited with death, the land is stained with blood ; and the voice of the blood of those who have suffered, cries to heaven from the ground. The day of retribution must come : the government that enacts, and the nation that tolerates, such laws as those under consideration, can expect no blessing from their God. It does not however stop here. Upon the principles which I have stated, it is clear as the light of the sun in meridian splendour, that every execution for forgery may be a judicial murder ; and if so, will not the guilt of murder in the sight of God rest on the head of all, from the highest to the lowest in the land, in proportion to the ability and the means which each possesses, but neglects to employ, in an endeavour to remove the evil." p. 28, 29.

The impression left on every mind by this very interesting pamphlet, must be, that the criminal code of our country needs a thorough revision. This is the opinion of most unprejudiced persons ; and, instead of trying the unwise and mournful experiment of *severity*, it is much to be desired that the experiment of *certainty* might have the preference.

It is the opinion of wisdom and common sense, that if a punishment proportionate to the offence of forgery were adopted, and in most cases, perhaps in every case, executed with determined strictness, the offence would, in a great measure, cease. As it is, the severity of the law only multiplies the crime. Hoping he may be one of those numerous instances wherein the humanity of the injured party conceals the offence from public knowledge, and either compromises with the criminal, or passes over his offence in silence, the offender

proceeds with alacrity to his work, and scarcely fears detection. And even where it is well understood, there is a great probability that, if detected, he will suffer; the known severity of the prosecutor is by no means sufficient to check the fallacious hope of concealment or escape. A gambling, lottery kind of spirit pervades the guilty bosom, which is evidently nourished by the chance—the mere chance of escape. Make the punishment first *just*, and then *certain*, and the crime would be checked. The experiment of severity is, however, still made by the monied interest, in defiance of argument and experience. The crime multiplies fast on their policy, and, as far as appears, no method of prevention is used to soften down the asperity of their mode of suppression. The facility of imitating paper money is clearly the temptation to the crime of forgery. They who have multiplied so indefinitely the sources of temptation, are surely bound to provide, if possible, some check to its power;—they ought to throw all possible difficulties in the way of committing the crime; they ought to seek means for its prevention. And if their ingenuity cannot oppose formidable difficulties to the commission of this offence, does it not become them to throw up a trade, how gainful soever, which presents so easy a method, and so seducing a temptation, of practising the arts of ingenious fraud. If nothing can be done short of withdrawing paper currency, at least in respect to small sums, it were better that a monied corporation should forego its gains, than that it should become so fruitful a source of crime, and possess the power of bringing upon the nation the guilt of blood.

In fine; it is the duty of all governments, as far as possible, to imitate the divine government. Therein we behold but few laws relative to criminal conduct; the punishment always bears a just proportion to the offence; repentance is both admitted, and sought for in the criminal; reformation, and not punishment, is the great object of the Lawgiver: yet when a crime is really of such magnitude as to be unpardonable, the punishment is invariably, and without mercy inflicted.

He who desires to know more on this interesting subject, may consult a work published by Basil Montague, Esq. containing an ample selection of the opinions of different authors on the punishment of death; wherein the overpowering weight of argument and fact is thrown into the scale, and merciless severity kicks the beam. Meanwhile we earnestly recommend the pamphlet before us to the perusal of our readers.

*The Testimony of Natural Theology to Christianity. By Thomas Gisborne, M.A. 12mo. London. Cadell and Davies, 1818.*

THE design of making human science tributary to the high ends of moral and religious instruction, is, doubtless, one of the noblest and purest with which the student of such science can be animated. It is, in a measure, entering into the most sublime purposes of the Creator himself. It is the characteristic of a mind capable of discerning and appreciating the gradations, which are established among all created existences; while it evinces a sublimity and elevation of view, not always possessed by the most devoted and most successful disciples of physical philosophy. As the noblest part of man is his moral and intellectual, so the highest aim of human science must be to subserve his moral instruction, and his immortal interests. An end comparatively insignificant is answered by the most brilliant discoveries in the secrets and laws of nature, or by the accumulation of facts relative to the material universe, if they are in no way brought to bear upon the cultivation of the mind and heart. He who can employ the principles or discoveries of natural philosophy, to produce a salutary effect upon our moral or intellectual nature, has achieved that, which, in its consequences, shall be incomparably more magnificent than those most interesting improvements, or more profound discoveries in science, which, in the view and intention of the authors, may have been limited to the more physical relations of things. We cannot fail to remark, in reviewing the advances of modern science, that there is a period approaching, when all the instruments and all the objects of purely secular philosophy, must be done with; and when most of the sciences, in losing all their objects, will have lost all their interest. The material universe, or at least that part of it that we are at present so much concerned with, will be destroyed, or its constitution broken up; and if it were not so, yet we can be interested in it, as a field for inquiry and speculation, only up to the limit at which our relation to it shall be dissolved.

We make not these observations with a view of discountenancing, or under-rating the pure study of nature; but simply to prepare our readers to give due weight to these moral truths, which may arise out of the laws and phenomena of the universe, and to express the measure and kind of gratification we receive at finding science made in any way conducive to religious impression. We are sure the study of nature is never conducted agreeably to the will of the

great author both of intellectual and material existences, but when it receives this direction.

Yet it by no means follows, that we are to be satisfied with the notices of religious truth, which nature is capable of affording; or because the sciences may be made tributary to our religious instruction, that, therefore, they are, as deists would rashly infer, adequate to the communication of all those truths which may conduce to our present happiness, or any of those which are indispensable to our salvation. To affirm either of these propositions, would appear to us equally irrational and impious; and for any one who believes in revelation, to admit either of these principles, would be a blasphemous aspersion upon that wisdom which has deemed it essential to our final happiness to super-add the sacred volume. There appears, to us at least, a very broad and important line of distinction between the truths which natural theology ever did, or ever can acquire, and those, the honour of whose disclosure, must ever be conceded to revelation. To endeavour to blend those discoveries of reason and revelation, to remove the line of demarcation, to withdraw the sacred limit which separates between revealed and natural truths, and to leave a portion of the territory claimed by the former, to be in future possessed by the latter, would betray little attention to the claims, and but a questionable affection for the interests of christianity. Besides, there is little to be gained by an effort to push the discoveries of natural theology beyond the point at which its disciples have generally felt themselves compelled to stop. Natural theology is but the A, B, C of moral science; and who ever thought of substituting the child's first book of letters and syllables, for the knowledge to which it can only be introductory and preparatory? When he has become master of the whole, he cannot be said to be in the possession of knowledge, in any sense valuable in itself, but only of the condition of knowing; and this first step cannot supersede any that are to follow; and, in short, derives its whole value from the acquisitions which it precedes.

That some important truths are taught by the works and dispensations of God, has been freely admitted by all the friends of revealed truth, and, indeed, cannot, for a moment, be disputed. But it must be obvious, that there was a limit as to the capabilities of nature to hint the principles of truth, or to develop the designs of infinite wisdom; there must have been also a designed boundary to the quantum of truth which

CONG. MAG. NO. 7.

it was in the intention of the Creator to impart by this medium. There can be no doubt that some of his perfections, as far at least as we are capable of apprehending them in an embodied state, are purposely, and powerfully exhibited in the constitution of the universe; but that that constitution was ever intended to bear on its face an anticipated development of the divine procedure, or that in its present state, containing as it does, the footstep of Divine Providence, and the moral antiquities, if we may so express it, of the human race, it can ever, by the aid of the most acute reason, fashion a single conception of the final-designs or intentions of the Creator, is certainly what we dare not affirm; and how far it can be affirmed with truth, we shall have occasion to see in the course of this article.

It is well known to many of our readers, that the most elaborate and philosophical attempt that was ever made to push the discoveries of natural theology, was made above a century ago by Dr. S. Clarke, at the lectures founded by Mr. Boyle. We have always viewed the first part of Dr. Clarke's treatise, as a very splendid effort of mind. But as to a very considerable portion of his reasoning, we must confess our incompetence to perceive its efficiency. Some portions of his argument, we admit, are irresistible; but to the whole, as a connected series of demonstrations, there are two principal objections: first, he aims at too much, or wishes to carry the discoveries of natural reason so far, and secondly, he seems to fail, in many cases, in making out the necessary sequence of his propositions, or in establishing their inseparable connexion with each other. However clear this link may have been to his own powerful mind, we believe most readers have considerable difficulty in offering an enlightened assent to his inferences.

Since his time, several similar attempts have been made to establish abstract reasonings upon purely rational facts; or to deduce moral and religious truths, to a very great extent, from the mere phenomena of natural history and philosophy; and one gentleman, with no ordinary degree of confidence, has constructed a metaphysical demonstration of the trinity in unity.

Paley, however, was content to confine the discoveries of natural theology to a few grand and primary truths:—the personality, natural attributes,—unity and goodness of the Deity. Since his time philosophy has made some interesting and important, if not splendid advances; and geology has risen to the name, and to something like the order of a science. Its discoveries have

been singular and numerous, and have afforded quite a new region for the speculations of the philosopher. Many of these speculations have been maliciously levelled against inspiration, and some facts, but loosely connected, and as loosely reasoned upon, have been brought together, with a view of discrediting the Mosaic date of the creation and history of the world. These attempts of infidels were premature as well as malicious: they were formed upon a science, the first principles of which are hardly yet understood; and which, depending as it does, in a great measure, upon chemistry, a science perpetually shifting its ground, and changing its principle, still partakes, in a considerable degree, of conjecture and hypothesis. It must have afforded ample gratification to the christian philosopher to have observed, how all these attempts of infidels have been defeated by the discoveries and reasonings of subsequent geologists; and that no facts yet collected by this science, do in any degree contradict, or render questionable the Mosaic history, but are all in perfect accordance with the facts of that history, and cannot receive even a reasonable explanation upon any other hypothesis.

Mr. Gisborne, perceiving the striking accordance of the facts ascertained by geology, with the scriptural account of the deluge, and the present moral relations of man, has conceived the purpose of presenting a brief refutation of the reasonings of sceptical geologists, and then of turning this science to still higher account, in considerably advancing the frontier boundaries of natural theology. His refutation of the reasonings of geologists against the Mosaic testimony, we shall first notice, as a distinct subject, in order that our subsequent analysis of his argument may be exhibited unbroken. The portion of his work to which we here refer, is in his second chapter, which treats on "the present state of the exterior strata of the earth; and on the moral conclusions which the phenomena suggest." Here he meets the objections to the chronology of Moses. The chapter is thus introduced:

" Suppose a traveller, penetrating into regions placed beyond the sphere of his antecedent knowledge, suddenly to find himself on the confines of a city lying in ruins. Suppose the desolation, though bearing marks of ancient date, to manifest unequivocal proofs that it was not effected by the moulderings hand of time, but has been the result of design and of violence. Dislocated arches, pendent battlements, interrupted aqueducts, towers undermined and subverted, while they record the primeval strength and magnificence of the structures,

proclaim the determined purpose, the persevering exertions, with which force had urged forward the work of destruction. Suppose, further, that, in surveying the reliques which have survived through the silent laps of ages, the stranger discovers a present race of inhabitants, who have reared their huts amidst the wreck. He enquires the history of the scene before him. He is informed that the city, once distinguished by splendor, by beauty, by every arrangement and provision for the security, the accommodation, the happiness of its occupiers, was reduced to its existing situation by the deliberate resolve and act of its own lawful sovereign, the very Sovereign by whom it had been erected, the Emperor of that part of the world. 'Was he a ferocious tyrant?'—'No,' is the universal reply. 'He was a monarch pre-eminent for consistency, forbearance, and benignity.'—'Was his judgment blinded or misled by erroneous intelligence, as to the plans and proceedings of his subjects?'—'He knew every thing but too well. He undertook with undeviating accuracy: he decided with unimpeachable wisdom.'—'The case, then,' cries the traveller, 'is plain: the conclusion is inevitable. Your forefathers assuredly were ungrateful rebels, and thus plucked down devastation upon their city, themselves, and their posterity.'

" The actual appearance of the globe, on which we dwell, is in strict analogy with the picture of our hypothetical city." p. 14—14.

He then proposes to bring forward some facts that may establish these representations, and in the course of these facts, he comes to encounter the hypothesis of some geologist, that the present earth is but formed out of the fragments and ruins of one which previously existed. The whole of the following passage, we consider as one of the most valuable and satisfactory in the volume:

" On the authority of certain writers on geology, it may be alleged, that the present earth was constructed from the materials of a former globe; and that the shells, and other organic remains imbedded in our existing strata, belonged to animals inhabiting that globe. In reply, then, it may be stated, first, that the hypothesis is gratuitous and unnecessary; and, secondly, that, if true, it would not invalidate the argument against which it is brought forward.

" The hypothesis is gratuitous and unnecessary.—Natural reason cannot prove it, nor show a necessity for it. The grounds, so far as I am aware, on which it is rested, are two: that many of the shells and organic remains of marine animals, and the reliques of some land animals, discovered in the earth, cannot be attributed to species known at present to exist: and that the immense extent of the beds of shells amalgamated into limestone, or aggregated without being consolidated, cannot be explained, except on the supposition that they are derived from the ruins of an anterior globe. As to unknown species of marine animals, what know we of the proficiencies of the ocean? What know we of the species inhabiting at this moment

those inscrutable depths, many miles, it may be, in perpendicular descent below the level which the longest sounding line has reached! Are we to pronounce concerning those depths and their inhabitants as though the flooring of the sea were spread before our eyes like the surface of Salisbury Plain, or like the bottom of a pond, which, by drawing a bolt, we had laid dry? As to the immensity of the quantity of shells discovered, it is undeniable that on the most contracted computation of chronology, for we ask not for the high antiquity of the present earth which infidelity assigns, sixteen centuries and a half elapsed between the creation and the deluge. Surely it is not too much to say, when the proverbially rapid multiplication of fishes is borne in mind, that the period of sixteen centuries was sufficient for the production of masses so enormous of shells and organic remains, as should be adequate, whether quietly upheaved in unbroken strata, by the expansion of submarine fires, or ground, through collision, into fragments by the fury of the waters, to account for all the actual phenomena. The formation, growing almost under the eyes of the beholder, of immense reefs and considerable islands of coralline materials in tropical climates by the labours of minute marine animals of various kinds, illustrates the incalculable multiplication of shell-fish. And if extensive tracts at the bottom of the ocean became covered, antecedently to the deluge, with shells and testaceous remains, who can reasonably affirm, that, by successive impulses of the waters in the hundred and fifty days during which the flood prevailed upon the earth, vast portions of these beds might not be piled one upon another, or that dense layers of mud, or of sand, or of stones, might not be poured upon them from other parts of the ocean; or that the new strata of earthy substances might not speedily be over-spread with fresh masses of shells, irresistibly driven by some new submarine commotion; or that these alternate strata might not then be uplifted and fractured by earthquakes and volcanic explosions, and left in horizontal, or inclined, or vertical, directions, with every diversity of shape, and of mixture, and of confusion, which investigation has hitherto detected? But it is likewise urged by the objector, that reliques also of terrestrial animals, belonging to a prior world, have been discovered. Why belonging to a prior world? Because the original species are not at present known. If the skeletons, then, of the mastodon, or of the megatherion,\* or the horns of some unknown tribe of the class of the deer or the buffalo, have been found on the surface of the earth, or dug up from bogs and cavities, may not those animals still survive in the central solitudes of America, or in the depths of Northern Asia? Or may not they have been extinguished at the deluge, or subsequently exterminated by a roving population of hunters? Is not any one of these suppositions at least as philosophical, as to erect on a basis so narrow and slender as that in question, the hypothesis of an anterior world? If, fifty years ago, the bones of a kangaroo had been extracted from a mine or a

moss, they probably might have been produced, by some philosopher, as triumphant proofs that our globe was constructed from the wreck of a predecessor.

" A difficulty has also been raised on another ground. It is alleged that a longer period of time than is consistent with the Mosaic records, would be requisite for the induration of rocks and stony strata from that state of softness, in which it is plain, from the unfractured condition of many tender shells imbedded in them, that these masses were piled together, if produced by the deluge. Attention to some common phenomena, may suffice to show, that for this difficulty there is no foundation; and that, on the contrary, the general laws of nature seem to give, on the whole, a tendency to material bodies, when they are in a moist or softened state, promptly to acquire that degree of hardness, which under the existing circumstances they are capable of attaining. We know, for example, how soon a wet lump of clay becomes very hard by the ordinary process of exhalation under exposure to the atmosphere. Under a scintillant sun, and in a season of drought, the surface of the earth is rendered, even in our temperate climate, impenetrable to the instruments of agriculture; and we are thus enabled to enter into the full import of the curse denounced against the Jewish nation, in the event of their rebellion against God: ' Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brimstone, acorching as a brazen vault; and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.' The return of metals to a fixed state by cooling, is extremely rapid. So likewise is the crystallization of metallic and other neutral salts. The tendency of gypseous substances to almost instantaneous induration, is exemplified in the familiar instance of the consolidation of fluid plaster. A kindred tendency is manifested in lime, by the formation of mortar. In crude calcareous earth, when diffused in the shape of invisible atoms in water, it is rendered equally apparent, by all the varieties of stalactites and sparry concretions pendent from the domes, or accumulating on the walls of caverns, and by the speedy and dense incrystation of every object which lies in the course of the stream from a petrifying spring.<sup>†</sup> That the same propensity exists in siliceous earth, is proved by the high mounds of flint raised on every side by deposition from the boiling fountains of Geyser in Iceland.<sup>‡</sup> Nay, it is well-understood by persons accustomed to witness chemical experiments, that the mixture of two bodies, each of which is previously converted into a perfectly transparent and aeriform state, may instantaneously produce, by their union, a visible and solid substance." p. 20-25.

The author then proceeds to illustrate these observations further, by detailing the particulars of a fact which fell under

<sup>\*</sup> Deut. xxviii. 22.

<sup>†</sup> At Matlock, and in other limestone districts.

<sup>‡</sup> See Letters on Iceland, by Von Troll, second edition, p. 342, &c. and the description of the boiling fountains of Geyser, in the recent publication by Sir James Mackenzie."

his own observation, "of the rapid formation of a hard ponderous substance, by the union of its component parts in an aeriform condition," and then concludes this interesting episode of his argument:

"The account of the creation given in the first chapter of Genesis, though it may not negative the possibility that the chaotic mixture of terrene and aqueous particles might be derived from the dissolution of an antecedent globe, seems to contain nothing to favour such a theory. The phraseology of the first verse, the subsequent recital of the production of light, of the separation of the earthy from the fluid atoms into their respective collections, of the progressive formation of herbs and trees, of fishes, of birds, of beasts, of man, rarely, I think, would convey to the mind of a reader unprepossessed by system, any other idea than that of a primary creation of the whole.

"But farther, the hypothesis, if it could be verified, would fail to invalidate our general argument. For, in the first place, the universal dislocations and convulsions which it has been incontrovertibly shown that the exterior strata of the present earth have undergone, must necessarily have destroyed the animated beings on its surface, any portion excepted which might be preserved by a miraculous interposition. Secondly, if there were a prior world, the existing organic remains must be divided between the ruins of that world and the present earth. And the smallest proportion of them which could in reason be allotted to the present earth, would abundantly confirm the destruction already stated. Thirdly, many of them will be found to be in their nature and circumstances such as could not be ascribed otherwise than to the present earth, without the grossest violation of every principle of probability." p. 45, 46.

We are here under the necessity of taking leave of our author for the present. In our next number we hope to give a full analysis of his effort to advance the boundaries of natural theology far beyond the limits assigned it by his most eminent precursors, with some general remarks upon the argumentative efficiency of the treatise. (To be continued.)

*The Scriptural Unity of the Churches of Christ Illustrated and Recommended: a Sermon, preached in College Street Chapel, Edinburgh, on the 8th of May, 1817; on occasion of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the CONGREGATIONAL UNION for SCOTLAND. By the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, M. A. Glasgow, 1817; and Hamilton, London.*

ABOUT ten years since, it will be recollectcd, the plan of a CONGREGATIONAL UNION FOR ENGLAND, was offered to the public attention, and some steps were taken to bring it to maturity.

From some cause or other, however, the project entirely failed, and left its well-wishers only to sigh over the triumph of disunion. Of the number of those grieved and disappointed friends of the measure, we candidly confess ourselves; and oft times have looked back with pensive remembrance to the days when our hearts beat high with expectation, fondly awaiting the moment when the adversaries of our church order should no more speak reproachfully, nor we ourselves suffer the manifest disadvantages of a dereliction of duty. We could not allow the distant hope of the desired union entirely to desert us; but clung to the persuasion, that happier days were yet in reserve for the churches. The amiable and intelligent author of the excellent discourse before us, has freshened all these recollections: his clear scriptural statements, have set the object vividly and pleasantly before our view. His report of the practical benefit of the Scottish Union, now in actual operation, has created in our minds an irresistible longing,—a devout wish and prayer, that the same "unity of the spirit," could be transported south of the Tweed:—nay, it has done more: it has infused into our bosoms a cheerful anticipation, that what English Independents have been long contemplating, and talking of, and attempting, and giving up as impracticable, they will, ere long, by divine help, accomplish; shamed out of their fears, or their jealousies, by the lovely precedent now exhibited by Caledonia.

But we must proceed to our duty in giving an analysis of this sermon, more with a view of inducing our readers to possess themselves of it, than to gratify a passing curiosity. It is founded on Galatians iii. 28. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The author, whose discourse certainly breathes the spirit of Christ, hath deemed it necessary, in a preface, to vindicate his choice of the topic discussed. It appeared to him perfectly right, and natural, and decorous, to select that point on this occasion, which he conceived was most vitally connected with it. His presbyterian brethren, on the one hand, felt umbrage at his firm and manly defence of his principles, and his independent brethren, on the other hand, felt afraid of giving offence by too open and distinct an avowal. Our author, who, if we mistake not, has the reputation among his friends for a large portion of "the milk of human kindness," was, however, so unfashionable, or so uncourteous, as to forget all wordly policy, and the "fear of man which bringeth a snare," by going with all the simplicity and straight-forwardness imaginable, direct

to that topic which he thought most proper, and most useful, for the occasion on which he was called to preach: and, when rebuked, has the hardihood, in a preface, to venture upon a vindication of his conduct against a host of lofty, or fearful brethren: which seems as much as to say: "You know what you have to expect when you solicit me to advocate your cause. I feel my principles to be so important, because so just, that the greater the occasion which calls for the avowal of them, the more broadly and unequivocally shall I feel myself bound to give it."

The discussion is introduced by some remarks on the nature of the church of Christ, particular and universal. His subject is, the relation of particular churches of Christ to each other, constituting a visible union. Of course, he must define his ideas of a particular church. He sets out, therefore, with denying the scriptural authority of national churches, as they are called, and asserting the authority of the New Testament for congregational churches. The reasonings of Hooker, Campbell, and others, relative to church polity, are founded on the assumption of an authority for national churches. And if this be conceded to them, their arguments will be found difficult of confutation. But we object to them in *himine*. We move the previous question, what is a church of Christ according to the views of the New Testament? Let our author be heard.

"That a church of Christ, according to the sense of the designation in these records, (viz. those of the New Testament,) means a number of believers in Jesus, associated, according to the directions of his word, for the purpose of observing the ordinances which he has instituted for them in their collective capacity, with a view to his glory, and their own spiritual benefit;—and that the churches so constituted were originally *independent*—that is, distinct societies, each possessing within itself the full power of applying the laws of Christ to its own members, and subject to no jurisdiction under heaven, but that of the inspired apostles, which identified with the authority of the Lord himself:—these are principles, the soundness of which I must at present be permitted to assume, as they are the avowed and distinguishing sentiments of these brethren, whom, on the present occasion, I am chiefly called to address.

"But to every attentive reader of the New Testament, there must forcibly present itself the idea of a union more extensive than that subsisting among the members of each christian society:—even a union among *all the churches*—such a union as rendered a member of one virtually a member of all; the whole of them in Judea and Samaria, in Asia, and in Europe,—from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum,—

being linked together in one extensive and harmonious brotherhood:—independent societies, yet acknowledging one another as 'all one in Christ Jesus'—separate flocks, each with its own appropriate pastors, but all the joint property, and the constant and equal care, of the 'good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep.'

"The heart that is not charmed with such a view, cannot surely be in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament. To every mind that has been framed, under divine influence, upon the principles of the gospel of peace, and that is not warped and narrowed by unhappy prejudices, it cannot fail to appear unspeakably delightful, and supremely desirable:—every departure from it must be deeply lamented, and every approach to it must be hailed with more than satisfaction, and promoted with all the ardour of affectionate zeal. While, therefore, we plead, distinctly and decidedly, for the independence of the churches, as a fundamental principle in their primitive constitution, let us beware of running to an unscriptural extreme—of so completely dis-uniting and insulating them from one another, as to present to view a number of christian societies, each in itself thoroughly organized, but without any bond, or feeling, or act of mutual connexion:—so that, instead of the lovely harmony of reciprocal confidence, and friendly intercourse, we should behold each church, like a separate fortress, surrounded with its walls and ramparts, with spies on the battlements, and sentinels at the gates, watching, with anxious jealousy, to prevent the entrance of intruders from the rest.—If it be at all probable that any disciple of the Lord Jesus should relish such a state of things, or entertain a single wish for any thing resembling it, let him never mention his desire to see christians returning to primitive simplicity and apostolic order:—for, in truth, that to which his wishes are directed, is as unlike the condition of the churches in the times of the apostles, as division is to unity, or hatred and hostility to affection and peace. His desire, were it gratified, would realize a scene which we cannot too devoutly deprecate, and to which it would not be our duty to submit,—'no, not for an hour.'

The preacher then proceeds to notice four points in which the primitive churches appear to have been related to each other.

I. By sending to one another their salutations, or wishes of prosperity.

II. The churches of the apostolic age did more than merely send to each other their mutual greetings and assurances of good-will. The interest felt by them in the success of the gospel was so deep, that they appear to have sent messengers occasionally, even to considerable distances, for the express purpose of encouraging and establishing recent converts to the faith of Christ, and newly formed christian societies.

III. Another circumstance particularly worthy of our attention, as indi-

cate of the unity and harmony of the first churches, is, their communion in the way of pecuniary "giving and receiving."

Under this head of discourse we have the following statement respecting the origin and effects of the Scottish Union.

"It was chiefly for purposes of this description, (viz. attending to, and mutually supplying, one another's temporal necessities,) that the CONGREGATIONAL UNION was originally instituted. The necessity of some such measure had long been felt. Previously to its institution, cases of pecuniary need, existing amongst the churches, were either entirely unknown to those who possessed the will and the ability to relieve them, or were relieved in a desultory and random manner, without any kind of regulated proportion to the extent of their respective claims.—The burden, besides, of supplying the relief, usually fell on a few individuals, in two or three places, whose ability and benevolent disposition happened to be known; and, while a most unequal pressure was in this way produced, what was actually contributed, failed of a highly desirable effect on the minds of those who received it; insomuch as it could not be received as coming from the churches; nor were the churches, consequently, the objects of those grateful feelings which the gift excited.—Since the establishment of the UNION, the state of things has been materially and happily altered. The churches are now, according to their ability, the contributors; and their liberality flows into a common treasury, from which a regular distribution is made to every needy case, according to its peculiar emergency. While all have thus an opportunity of contributing, all enjoy the satisfactory assurance that their bounty reaches its destination in the most equitable and efficient manner. And besides the regularity and the efficiency of the aid imparted, two other ends are answered, not inferior in importance to these. In the first place, the churches are made to feel the truth of the text,—to feel their unity. By the practical interchange of good offices, the ties of mutual affection are drawn the closer. The churches are the givers; the churches are the receivers. The act of giving keeps alive and invigorates the sentiments of love in the bosoms of the givers; and the expressions of pious and affectionate gratitude, with which the bounty is every year acknowledged, show, in the most pleasing and edifying manner, the influence of it, as a token of brotherly love on the hearts of the receivers.\* In the second place, pastors of churches, especially in districts of the country that are scantly, or not at all, supplied with evangelical preaching, are enabled, by the bounty of the UNION, not only to give themselves more entirely to the work of the ministry, for the edification of their own people, but also to extend their itinerant labours in the neighbourhoods surrounding their respective places of residence, and to proclaim the salvation of God to

multitudes who were perishing for lack of knowledge;—by which means, through the accompanying blessing of heaven, very considerable good, there is reason to believe, has, in various instances, been effected. On this ground I may make my appeal, in behalf of the CONGREGATIONAL UNION, to believers of every name. For, surely, the conversion of sinners to God, by whose instrumentality soever it may be brought about, while it causes joy among the angels of God, will gladden the hearts, not of Christians of the one denomination only, whose agency happens to have been employed, but of "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity"—of all who partake of the spirit of heaven."

"The CONGREGATIONAL UNION has not the remotest connexion with government, or discipline. Its committees are merely the 'Paul and Barnabas,' through whose hands the liberality of the brethren is transmitted to the elders of those churches that are in need:—or, if you will, they are the 'messengers of the churches,' confidently intrusted with their bounty; only with this necessary addition, that they adjust the proportions of it required by different cases, as well as take the charge of its safe conveyance. The annual meetings of the Union are held publicly, before multitudes of assembled brethren. Nothing relative to the internal management of the churches is ever mentioned, or alluded to. Were the slightest approach, indeed, ever to be made to any thing of this kind, all consistent independents should combine to put it down. I should be among the first in these circumstances, to vote for its abolition. And, indeed, nothing could be more easily effected. The churches have only to withhold their contributions,—and the Congregational Union is no more."

IV. The unity of the primitive churches was such, that a member of any one of them, when known to be so, by direct recommendation, or otherwise, was freely admitted to the fellowship of the saints in other places, wherever he went.

Under this branch of the subject, the following general principles are laid down as having the sanction of scriptural authority.

1. It is proper, and orderly, and for edification, that when members leave one church, to join the stated fellowship of another, they should be recommended by the church which they leave, to the church which they are intending to join.

2. Every church ought to be very cautious in receiving any who come to them without such recommendation.

3. Every church ought immediately to receive such as come to them recommended from another, unless they themselves know of any thing against them,

\* A reference is here made to note D at the end of the Sermon, where some very delightful specimens indeed are given of that gratitude and brotherly love of which the author speaks.

\* A reference is here made to note E, in corroboration of this appeal, from which we extract a passage so important as a point of ecclesiastical history, that we are induced to place it as an article of Religious Intelligence in the present number.

on the ground of which they have reason to question their Christian profession.

The sermon concludes by an animated address, exhorting to unity among Christians, and cautioning church-members against presumptuous confidence in their external profession, as well as enjoining others to dissolve their "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," and seek a union with the family of God.

We beg leave earnestly to recommend this excellent discourse to the attention of our readers in general, and especially to our clerical friends and students for the ministry, conceiving the subject to be one which has not taken hold of the minds of many of our friends which its importance demands;—at least, that much remains to be done. The specimens which our

author has here and elsewhere given us, of his qualifications for the task, induce us to venture on hinting to him, the acceptance which we believe would be given to a volume from him on the subject of church government at large. Every day strengthens our conviction of the propriety,—the duty,—the necessity of informing ourselves accurately on this subject. When beneficed clergymen of the establishment gravely propose, as they have lately done, a consolidated UNION between the church of England, and the church of Rome, it is surely high time for dissenters to look about them, and by no means unwise, we deem, for independents to consider, what scriptural relation their churches have to each other, and in what way the New Testament provides for their union and consolidation.

### EPITOME OF MISSIONARY TRANSACTIONS.

#### *Society of the United Brethren for the furtherance of the Gospel.*

The early and persevering efforts of this society have not been unrewarded with success. In the three Danish West India Islands, St.Thomas, St.Croix, and St. Jan, the brethren's congregations at present amount to about 12,200 souls; in Greenland to 1100; in Antigua to 10,000; in St. Kitt's to 2000. The congregations of christian Indians, in North America, suffered much both before and during the first American war. Great loss has lately been sustained by the burning of Fairfield, in Upper Canada, the principal settlement among the Indians. The mission is, however, renewed at NEW FAIRFIELD, from whence the missionary, C. F. Dencke, thus writes: "Our people returned from Chonaille, where they had received articles of clothing and other necessaries from the Superintendent of Indian affairs. This gentleman had treated them with great kindness, and, at my request, let them have the first turn in the distribution. They conducted themselves with great propriety, so as to make a good impression on the Superintendent's mind, as to the beneficial influence of the mission. We gave humble thanks to the Lord for preserving them from seduction and transgression in that strange place. One of them said: 'Formerly, when I went to receive these presents, I spent all I got in brandy; but now, by the Lord's mercy, I avoided drunkenness, and I and my brethren have brought all home for the benefit of our families.'

After mentioning the celebration of the anniversary of the settlement (Sept. 1817,) he says: "The boys in the school, and other young people, walked about the settlement in great order, singing hymns of praise to our Saviour, for all his mercies. The moon shone bright, and many strangers and wild Indians, who were present on this occasion, were so much affected by the solemnity, that they could not refrain from tears."

"When we consider the great difference between the quiet and peaceful nights we enjoy in this place, and the noise and discord which often took place at Old Fairfield, where the drunken and riotous sons of Belial were continually passing and re-passing, filling the air with their bellowsings, we give most humble and fervent thanks to that God, who alone could bestow on us such a blessing. Now we hear almost every evening, in our tents of peace, the songs of Zion, and praise, honour, might, and blessing, ascribed to the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood."

"I am now diligently employed in preparing for the press some translations of parts of the New Testament, in the DELAWARE language, as the New York Bible Society have offered to print them."

God has been pleased to bless the mission at the CAPE OF GOOD HOPE with much success. The forming of a third settlement is in contemplation when means can be found to support it. About 1600 Hottentots constitute the two congregations at Gruenthal and Gruenekloof: many more attend public worship; and in the interior there is a great desire among the heathens to receive more teachers.

In 1765, a settlement named SARAKTA, was formed near Astrachan, in Russia.

Asia, with a view to introduce the gospel among the Kalmucks, in which at first great exertions were made, till the dispersion of the neighbouring hordes seemed to render them unavailing. Latey, the attempts of the brethren have been renewed in that quarter, chiefly through the encouragement and assistance of the London Missionary Society.

In most of the brethren's stations, the work of the Lord prospers, and gradual and continual additions are made to their churches. From ANTIGUA, one of the brethren writes : " By God's mercy and blessing, the worthy men, who are here in authority, are become promoters of the gospel. The church discipline, introduced into our missions, is even used by some, as a means of keeping negroes to their duty in preference to any corporeal chastisement. It happened lately, that a negro, who was in the idle habit of coming every morning too late to his work, was addressed by his master thus : ' Do you go to church ? ' ' Yes, master.' ' What church do you go to ? ' ' To the Moravian in Spring Gardens.' ' Well, then, I shall tell your minister, how you neglect your work.' Ever since, the negro has been most regular in his attendance."

" We have now received the consent of the Elders Conference of the Unity, to begin to build a fourth settlement, in the east part of the island, to which we were invited by the legislature."

In JAMAICA, they have to combat, as well as others, with the prejudices, or rather with the impiety of professed christians. But amidst all, they increase. One of the missionaries having gone to preach at Poco, a station in the island, a considerable number, he says, attended. During the sermon, a heathen woman began to twist her body about, and make all manner of grimaces. " I bore it for some time, till she disturbed the congregation, when I desired one of the assistants\* to lead her out, thinking she was in pain. When the service was over, I inquired what ailed her, and was told, that it was a usual thing with the negroes on that estate, and called by them *conscience*. I told them, that if they were guilty of such affectation, it was no wonder that the people of this world complained and took occasion to scoff at religion ; adding, that when we are humbled on account of our sins and depravity, grimaces will do us no good, but only a believing look to Jesus for help and salvation ; for he had suffered for us, and only he can give rest to the soul." At one place in the island there was an old negro named Peter, who is lately dead, and who was remarkable for his zeal in stirring up his sable brethren to go and hear the gospel. On one occasion, as he was coming out of his house on the Lord's day, on the arrival of the missionary to preach, old Peter cried : " Good people, massa come now, let us all go to church, and receive a blessing ! " To a negro who was going another way, he spoke in the most pressing manner, exhorting him to stay. " Do stay," said he ; " the word of God will do you good, and be sweeter than honey to your heart ; and when you have once tasted it, you will run to hear it again." When Peter rose from his seat after the service was over, the missionary overheard him whispering to himself : " O my Saviour, how dear art thou to me ! "

The congregation of christian negroes at PARAMARIBO in Surinam, has increased of late both in numbers and grace. To the blessing of the Lord rests upon it, and it enjoys peace and safety, under the protection of the government of the colony. During the year 1816, ninety-nine persons were baptized, and seventy admitted to the Lord's supper. At the end of the year, the number of those belonging to the congregation was 713, of whom 553 were communicants.

At GNADENTHAL, the brethren were last year favoured with a very agreeable visit from the Governor, Lord Charles Henry Somerset, on his way to the frontier. His Excellency, with his whole party, attended their evening service. At the conclusion, the congregation sang with heart and voice several benedictory verses, commanding the governor and his company to the protection and blessing of God. His Excellency and his daughters expressed great satisfaction with the singing of the Hottentots. He left Gnadenthal, assuring the missionaries of his best wishes and intentions, to promote the good work they were engaged in, to the utmost of his power.

The communication with the three settlements in LABRADOR, can be maintained only by a vessel belonging to the Society, and annually sent with supplies. The providence of God has remarkably appeared in permitting this communication to continue without interruption, ever since the commencement of the mission, a period of fifty-three years. In the year 1816, however, the vessel was for the first time prevented, by the ice and repeated storms, from touching at Hopetown, and was obliged to return to England, having four missionaries on board, who were

\* An assistant or helper in the brethren's missions, is not employed to preach, but only to visit the sick, give good advice, seek to maintain peace and order, make reports to the missionaries of the state of the congregation, and give notice of cases where their help is required.

passing from Nain to Hopedale. The ship proceeded as usual last year with missionaries and supplies, and after many hair-breadth escapes from destruction on the rocks of Labrador, and amidst the most frightful fields and mountains of ice, she was brought safe through to her desired haven. It appears that the ice on the coast has been on the increase for three years; but the dangers of the last voyage seem to have raised some apprehensions, lest all communication should be cut off.

The following interesting account of the poor Greenlanders, has lately arrived from the Missionary Kleinschmidt, at Lichtenau.

"Having for some days been occupied with various heavy and distressing considerations, on account of the excessive indigence of many of our widows and orphans, whereby a continually increasing load of anxiety devolves upon us, their teachers, a thought suddenly came into my mind, which immediately cheered and comforted me in some degree, though it referred to a still uncertain futurity. Lichtenau being the most numerous congregation of christian Greenlanders, it may be easily conceived, that we have many poor widows and orphans, whose providers have either died a natural death, or, as is frequently the case, have lost their lives at sea. To this must be added, that in this vicinity, many heathen Greenlanders are still found, who often visit us, and hear the word of God. Many a heathen widow, therefore, after the death of her husband, is driven, partly by necessity, to seek refuge with us. In the sequel, however, by the power of the gospel, such have been truly converted.

"Thus, last year, a widow with four small children, and this year, another with two children, came to us, the former of whom has already been added to the candidates for baptism. In this way, the number of widows and orphans is continually on the increase, especially at Lichtenau, and it is a subject of much anxiety and distress to us, how to rescue them from absolute starvation, and to provide for them and their children. For this we have no means. We are not permitted to earn any thing by trading with the Greenlanders. Having no fund for the assistance of the desolate and fatherless, the burden falls upon us (the missionaries) personally. Certainly it is very hard to see such objects of compassion, without relieving them. The only remedy we have, is to sell from time to time our own allowance of coffee to the Danish traders, though barely sufficient for the supply of our personal wants, and those of our families. By the produce of this sale we procure tobacco for the relief of the needy; for tobacco is the current coin of the country, with which they may purchase food, and skins for raiment. As neither I nor my family make use of tobacco, I have bought tobacco to the amount of seven dollars and a half, which was presently consumed.

"Now, as my mind has been, especially of late, much oppressed with these circumstances, and their future effects, it occurred to me, that the English are well-disposed both to missions, and to the poor in every quarter of the globe; and who can be poorer than the poor Greenlanders? Surely they would not refuse to help them, did they know the truth, and did some one represent it to them in an impressive manner. I therefore take the liberty of mentioning the situation of the poor people to you, and am persuaded, that your encouragement would soon induce your friends to make a collection for the Greenlanders, which need not be very large, and yet might afford material help. What joy would this occasion among the Greenlanders, who are as simple as children! Money our Greenlanders do not want; but various European articles they can make use of. For tobacco, (in rolls, or pig-tail, as it is called,) the more opulent are willing to part with any thing. Knives, as also large iron nails, and needles, not too small, are in continual requisition, and how gladly would many European friends serve them with such trifles, did they but know how much they are needed, and what joy they would occasion: whereas we missionaries cannot help them for want of means!"

In another letter, Mr. Kleinschmidt writes:—

"Our poor Greenlanders had to endure a severe famine in spring, in consequence of the severity of the winter; it was a heavy time for us, as they directed their eyes to us in all distress, and we could not help them as we wished. The little children especially excited our pity, who could endure hunger less than others, and therefore besieged our house daily, begging for food. I bought 500 cod-fish, besides many herrings, and distributed them chiefly among the children; many of the adults were obliged to eat part of their tent skins. When our store was quite exhausted, what were our feelings, when we did not know how to procure food for so many in this wilderness! But now the Lord's help appeared beyond expectation, swiftly and completely; he heard our groaning, and it seemed as though food rained from heaven. The cold abated, and an uncommon number of seals came near the shore, so that some were daily caught and carried home."

In consequence of an appeal made by Mr. James Montgomery, the editor of the CONG. MAG. NO. 7.

Iris newspaper, at Sheffield, donations to the amount of 122*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* in money, and several valuable parcels, containing needles, knives, iron hooks, &c. have been received, and will be applied for the purpose for which they were given. The widows and orphans, both at Lichtenau, and at the settlements at New Herrnhut and Lichtenfels, who are in the same predicament, will be considered.

The present number of settlements is 29, and of missionaries 153. The total number of converts was estimated in 1812, at 27,400.

### WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

For nearly 50 years, the attention of Christians in this connexion, has been directed to the miserable state of the heathen world. They laboured for many years chiefly among the slaves of the West Indies, with no small success. The late Rev. John Wesley, and his zealous co-adjutor, the late Dr. Coke, led the way in this great work. By the death of Dr. Coke in his sixty-fifth year, and during his nineteenth voyage over the Atlantic on missionary services, the affairs of the Missions now devolve more immediately on a committee, appointed by the Conference. Having caught the missionary ardour of the times, they have lately adopted a more extended plan, both at home and abroad. New stations have been fixed on, and occupied. The Irish speaking their native tongue, and but little removed from heathenism, the Catholics of France, the inhabitants of different nations at Gibraltar, and the Catholic and other populations of British America, have all shared in the good intentions of this Society. This is, indeed, missionary work of no small importance; though not so immediately coming under this name as we are accustomed to think.

It is pretty generally known that a conspiracy has, of late years, been carried on in the British West India Colonies, by those who should have been the first to crush the operation of such a conspiracy in the bud. Instead of being sheltered under the shield of just power, the Missionaries in the West Indies have been opposed, and prohibited, and persecuted, by power perverted and abused. The cause of truth, of innocence, and of benevolence, is, however, gradually gaining ground; and he who is *head over all things to his church*, will, doubtless, make *all things work together for good*. The legislature of St. Vincent's appear to have abandoned their avowed intention to embarrass the Mission there by persecuting enactments. In Demerara the opposition appears to subside, and the congregations have greatly increased. In Antigua, the oldest, and the most successful, of the West India Stations, the Societies have had an increase of upwards of 400 members, and enjoy the full confidence and protection of the local authorities. In Jamaica, the work rapidly extends, both where Societies have been long formed, and in new places where the Missionaries have been invited to extend their labours. The Missions in Jamaica, and the Bahama Islands, are, however, still persecuted by unrighteous laws, which, it is devoutly to be hoped, will never be sanctioned by the British government. In New Providence, one of the Bahama Islands, a law has lately been made for restraining the worshippers of God from assembling later than sun-set, and earlier than sun-rise: and, as the day and night are there of equal length, and the slaves work from sun-rise to sun-set, this is, in fact, an entire prohibition of their attendance on the worship of God during the week. It is said the effect of this law on the minds of all classes of the people, is truly affecting, if not alarming. "The poor blacks," say the Missionaries, "when they heard of it, came to us in tears: this was a moving sight:—nay, to us, it was a heart-breaking sight. Their language on this melancholy occasion, was nearly as follows:—'What have we done to the white people, that they will not let us worship our God on week evenings? That was all the comfort we had, after a hard day's labour, many of us in the burning sun, to go to our chapels at night, and hear our ministers speak the words of life to us, and to join in singing the praises of God. What have we done, or what have our ministers done? Surely they can find no fault in them!' One black man of distinguished piety said, with tears flowing, 'they might as well take away my life, as deprive me of our meetings.' It was affecting to see his venerable and sable face, skirted with grey locks, turned towards heaven, while, in the simplicity of his heart, he exclaimed:—'Lord God, men will get leave to dance together, to play at cards together, to get drunk together, and to sin together; but God's peaceable people cannot get leave to worship him together. What is this? How is this!'"

The measures preparatory to the enactment of this law, were carried on with such secrecy, that nothing could be known respecting it with certainty, and therefore no effort could, with propriety, be made towards its prevention. The bill passed into a law, which is enforced with the greatest rigour. The chapels, which used to be crowded with slaves and others, on stated evenings of the week,

were closed ; and the hour before sun-rise on the sabbath, which the poor blacks employed in prayer, was denied them. This persecution is borne patiently. No resistance has been manifested. Such are the happy effects of legislative regulations of the worship of God. But we turn to a more propitious quarter.

The Methodist Society have availed themselves of the invitations of the government of St. DOMINGO, under the Presidency of the late Petion, and have despatched several Missionaries to that island. They were received with much kindness by M. Ingincac, Secretary of State, and presented by him to the late President. He received them courteously, telling them, that all religions were tolerated by the state, and that they might establish a church there, (Port au Prince,) or in any part of the republic.

Their first impressions on entering a country where the superstitions of Popery had been merely superinduced upon the ignorance of Paganism, without a just knowledge of Christianity, were somewhat discouraging; especially as for a few of the first weeks they spent in the island, they were rendered unable, by attacks from fever, from entering upon their work. Their recent letters, however, are written under cheering anticipations of being able to effect, in some good degree, the great objects of their mission. The freedom of religious worship guaranteed by the laws, the respect paid by the people to every form of religion, and the earnest and attentive manner in which the congregations listen to the preaching of the word of God, are all encouraging circumstances, and warrant the hopes which the Committee have indulged, that Divine Providence may make use of the brethren there to communicate the important blessings of religious knowledge, to a people whose civil condition is rapidly advancing under a liberal government, and an enlarging commerce. "Our congregation," says Mr. Brown, in a letter dated Port-au Prince, May, 1817, "fills the house, and covers the pavement before it; and if sighs, tears, and groans, are marks of their being affected, these we witness. Very often they respond to what we say in our sermons. Two or three Sundays ago, preaching from Luke xxiv. 46, 47, towards the close, wishing to rivet the words on their mind, I addressed them : 'Do you think, my friends, that we have come here to publish a lie?' Instantly, no, no, echoed from every quarter. Taking advantage of this declaration, I proceeded to insist on our total depravity and guilt; on the absolute necessity of repentance and remission of sins; and pointed them to Jesus Christ as the only Saviour; while, Yes, yes, was reiterated at the close of almost every sentence! It is pleasing to see a numerous congregation; it is pleasing to see our hearers deeply attentive, and moved with what is delivered; but short of their conversion we cannot be satisfied. However, when their profound ignorance of the leading principles of religion, together with their superstitions, are taken into the account, conversions can hardly be expected as the work of a day."

"A large place has now become necessary. We have one in view, and have been considering how to meet the additional expense. This is the plan we propose : 1. To beg among the gentlemen here for money to fit it up for the two-fold purpose of a school and chapel. 2. To found a school on the Lancasterian plan."

"By the laws of the republic, no white can own property, or exercise any office. We thought it necessary to lay our proposals before the President." We insert his answer.

" Port-au-Prince, May 27, 1817.

" Alexander Petion, President of Hayti, to Messrs. John Brown, and James Catto.

" Gentlemen :

" I have received your letter of the 14th inst. requesting my permission to establish a school here on the Lancasterian plan, and to receive for that purpose, those contributions, which the inhabitants of this capital are disposed to afford you.

" Agreeably to your desires, I hasten to grant you the authority you request; and I shall witness with pleasure your project crowned with the success which it merits, being fully convinced that education raises man to the dignity of his being, and contributes to render him happy in society.

" As to the exercise of your religion, the 49th article of our constitution provides for freedom of worship; and therefore, nothing will prevent you, while acting in conformity to the law established for all, from discharging the plious duties of the mission committed to your trust. I shall willingly do all that lies in my power, gentlemen, to prove to the honourable society whose missionaries you are, how much I am flattered by the selection which it has made of you, and how much I desire to concur with them in promoting the happiness of my fellow men.

" Apply to me with confidence on all occasions in which I can be of service to you, and receive the assurance of my perfect consideration. (Signed) " PETION."

The Committee have reason to expect an equally favourable opening to another part of this important island, which they have resolved to embrace as soon as suitable persons can be obtained for that enterprise.

We have placed this account in apposition with that from Jamaica, and New Providence, that our readers may the more easily compare the characters of the two governments, as bearing upon the cause of religion.

The Society's Missionary at the CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, Mr. Shaw, led by a strong desire to preach the gospel to the heathen in the interior, has, with the

consent of the Committee, fixed his residence among the little Namaquas, a tribe of Hottentots near and upon the Khamies mountains. Encouraged by a pious missionary employed by the Missionary Society of London, he, and his excellent and intrepid wife, left the Cape for the interior in a waggon, without any particular designation: but being met by a chief of the little Namaqua tribe, who, with some of his people, were proceeding to the Cape *in search of a Missionary*, whom he might invite to reside among them, he regarded this as a providential indication, and consented to go with him. The Hottentots appear not only willing, but eager to be instructed,—a people prepared for the Lord. Another missionary has now joined him.

The Island of CEYLON attracts much regard from the Committee. *Fourteen* missionaries are now labouring there with many facilities, and very pleasing prospects. They have established a mission-house, printing-office, &c. at Columbo, from whence the Scriptures and useful tracts are issued to the inhabitants, in the Cingalese, and in other languages spoken in the island. Many of our readers are informed of the conversion of Petrus Punditti Sekarra, a Budhist priest of high rank and influence, through the blessing of God on the pious labours of Mr. Clough, a Wesleyan missionary. This Budhist priest is now usefully employed in revising the translations, and occasionally in preaching. Did our limits permit, we should be happy to give our readers his first sermon. It is lively, simple, earnest, and faithful. In a touching and artless manner, he states his own conversion, after the manner of the Apostle of the Gentiles, as an argument with his hearers to embrace the gospel. Another Budhist priest of great rank and considerable abilities, has also cast off his yellow robe, and been baptised in the name of Jesus; and, like Petrus, has been enabled to withstand the powerful temptations of worldly interest and connexions. Other priests, also, have followed their example, and the missionaries seem to promise themselves more success with the priests than the common people, whose minds are enveloped with thick darkness. A priest lately made application at Columbo to be baptised, but the brethren conceived, that he did not understand christianity sufficiently to be a proper subject for baptism. They therefore gave him the New Testament, desiring him to read it, and come again in a few weeks. After some time he came again, but they still put him off. He then took up his abode at Columbo, labouring to understand all the great truths of christianity. One Sunday the brethren were surprised to see him in the mission-house without his yellow robe, being dressed in a blue silk gown. He earnestly desired to be baptised that day; the brethren said, "you cannot expect any temporal advantage from us." He replied, "I do not want any from any man; I have sufficient property of my own to keep me; I want to be a christian, because I believe the christian religion is true." "Who could have forbidden water," exclaimed the narrator: "our brethren baptised him, and he appears to be a seeker of all that christianity can give." Formerly, in the commencement of our religion, in defiance of every disadvantage, we read, that a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith; and it appears probable this will soon be the case in Ceylon. Should it be so, they will be peculiarly fitted to carry the gospel into the interior, which the missionaries are very eager to penetrate. Their work is but just begun; but they have entered upon it with ardour, and apparently in a right spirit. The inhabitants are in a wretched state as to religion. The worship of the Devil is very common, and in performing it they have the most horrible shapes which the imagination can conceive. In other cases the ceremonies are whimsical and ridiculous. One of the missionaries mentions that he overtook a number of these poor ignorant creatures, who were conducting their god into the country on a wooden horse. On inquiring, he was informed, it was customary for their god once a year to go into the country a shooting!

The missionaries are acting vigorously, on a deep conviction of the importance of establishing schools for the education of youth. They have formed nineteen schools, containing upwards of a thousand children. This is laying the foundation. It will be remarkable, however, if they should proceed without opposition. One of the missionaries writes: "We have lately begun to preach in the Pettah. I am told, the smiths, or founders, are much displeased. They cast images, and have pretty much to do with idolatry. Like Demetrius, they are afraid, probably, that their craft is in danger."

Two priests of the highest order of the Budhist priesthood, have been brought to England by Sir Alexander Johnstone, at their own earnest request, to be instructed in christianity and useful knowledge, under the direction of this Society. They are inquiring men; one of the age of twenty-seven, the other twenty-five. Dr. Adam Clarke, to whose care they are committed, reports very favourably of their diligence in learning, and their general conduct. The portions of Scripture he points out to them, they read with great care and earnestness; and of their own accord commit many of them to memory. Munni Radhang often reads and sings the Gospel of Matthew, in Cingalese, for hours at a time.

(To be continued.)

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

*Remarkable Revival of Religion at GLENLYON, in the Highlands of Scotland, recorded in the Fifth Report of the CONGREGATIONAL UNION for Scotland, May, 1817.*

"In a district of the Highlands, which has been repeatedly visited by the pastor of one of the churches, there has, of late, been a very remarkable revival of religion. And while we rejoice, and bless the Lord on account of the effect given to the labours of other ministers, we must view those of our respected brother, as having, by the divine blessing, tended greatly to the furtherance of this most important work. By a letter dated the 2nd of April, we find that brother paid a visit to Glenlyon, the scene of this remarkable out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, on the 2d of November last, intending to stop only three days, and return home by the Sabbath. But such was the attention excited to the word, and the very extraordinary effects produced by it, that he felt constrained to remain three weeks; preaching, with two exceptions, once every day, frequently twice, and three times on Sabbaths, till his bodily strength was quite exhausted. Since that time he has frequently visited the same spot, where the work continues to go on. 'What numbers,' he remarks, 'are brought to a knowledge of the truth, no one, I believe, can at present say with certainty; but there are above two hundred known to be in a hopeful way since this revival commenced; one hundred of these are rejoicing in the truth, (among whom there are some as young as from nine to fourteen years of age,) and the rest are under deep convictions.' Nor will the people in that district now hear any thing but the gospel. With this they are favoured in a chapel of ease at some distance, by a minister of the church of Scotland; and many of them go to hear our brother. He says, in his letter, 'two Sabbaths ago, there were about sixty of them here, a distance of from seventeen to eighteen miles, among whom was one woman between sixty and seventy years of age, who walked all that distance in the morning to hear the word, and after the services of the day, returned a great part of the way home.' This remarkable revival began in last harvest, by means of the preaching of a very worthy minister of the church of Scotland, who paid an occasional visit to the neighbourhood, and who was heard by many of the people in Glenlyon. Since then the labours of the minister in the chapel of ease, just adverted to, have been rendered useful to many. But the gentleman, to whose usefulness this part of the

report particularly alludes, enjoys the peculiar advantage of free access to the people, and of preaching among them in their own glen; and to this advantage, no doubt, may be traced, under God, the great success of his ministry there. Since the 2d of November last,\* he has preached about sixty times in that quarter. Sometimes in a house, and sometimes in the open air. Sometimes in a wood in the dark evenings, with lamps hung upon the trees; and in general, all the inhabitants in whose power it was to attend, old and young, within the space of fourteen miles, were present. Surely that must be an unfeeling mind, indeed, which does not find an abundant reward to the Congregational Union, in having been in any way instrumental in aiding such a work."

## PERSECUTION OF THE FRENCH PROTESTANTS.

*From the Times Newspaper, June 23, 1818.*

"Bordeaux, June 17, 1818.

"WE are now much occupied with an incident which interests the whole of the reformed church of France. One of the deacons of our church has just been condemned to pay a fine by the tribunal of police, for not having decorated the front of his house with the usual hangings, during the procession of the host on Corpus Christi day. This prosecution appears to us a manifest violation of the fifth article of the charter; but what appears more surprising still, are the arguments employed by the public ministry, (*the law officers of the crown,*) who demanded the condemnation. They rested these arguments on a regulation of 1757, which they cited at the audience, as their authority; and which you will observe renewed the rigour of the persecutions against the protestants, the exile of their pastors, the interdiction of their assemblies, the annulling of their marriages, the declaration of bastardy on their infants, &c. What must we think of the age in which we live, of seeing such atrocities dug up from their grave? No attempt is made, it is true, to bring them again into exercise at the present moment, and the attempt could not succeed though made; but it might be expected, that shame would restrain them from recalling those barbarous decrees; especially as by so doing they violate existing laws, and aim a direct blow at rights consecrated by the charter.

"Article V. of the charter, is thus expressed:—'Every man professes his religion with equal freedom, and obtains

\* The meeting at which this report was read, was held on the 8th of May, 1817.

for his worship the same protection.' It is evident, that if the protestants can be compelled to put out hangings, then to bend the knee, &c. acts prohibited by their conscience, there is no longer any toleration in religion, and by degrees, we may expect the revival of former abuses. *Attempts of the same kind appear to have been made in the whole of the south.* We know of energetic representations made, addressed to the government by divers consistories, and we think it necessary to display zeal and firmness in the delicate circumstances in which we are with regard to the Concordat. The Concordat presented to the chambers, but not discussed, threatens us with the revival of *all the laws of the church*; and you are not ignorant what the ultra-montane party mean by these expressions. I know that some of the provisions of this charter may be amended; but is it not deplorable that the idea of proposing them should have been entertained? If we show weakness or indifference, can we tell how far our supineness, or want of energy, may be abused, in the discussions of the approaching session of the chambers, to extort from them concessions which may endanger our liberty of conscience?

"A peculiar system of management appears to be adopted by those who move in these affairs. They appear to act in concert; as the same attempts have been made in different places. The condemned have demanded signed copies of their sentences; but they have not received them, and probably never will. This mode of proceeding appears a tacit confession on the part of the authorities, that their decisions are not founded on law. It is to be remarked likewise, that though several protestants resisted a compliance with the ceremony above-mentioned, only one, a Swiss pastry-cook, was prosecuted, on a belief that he was without support: on the other hand, the Jews have been persecuted in great numbers."

\* \* It is to be hoped, those protestants in England, and especially those of higher religious pretensions, who, in the late persecutions in the South of France, could see nothing but the ebullitions of political feeling, will now be able to discern the distinct features of persecution for conscience sake. The scene is set before them in another field,—in the *loyal* city of Bourdeaux. The agents are no longer execrable Trestailors, but the *lawful* authorities of the place.

*Meeting of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
of the CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.*  
On the 21st of May, 1818, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

held its Annual Meeting; when it was addressed in due form by the Earl of Errol, his Majesty's Commissioner, who presented, at the same time, the Prince Regent's letter to the Assembly, containing his donation of 2000*l.* for the promotion of christian knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. After sitting nearly a fortnight, and going through the usual forms of voting addresses, returning thanks, and hearing appeals, in few of which our readers would feel any interest, the Assembly, on the 1st of June, was dissolved by the Commissioner in the name of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and by the Moderator in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Only one case came before the Assembly to which we feel it our duty to advert, as illustrative of the spirit of the Scots Church, and of the encouragement which *ske* affords to able and faithful labourers in their Master's cause. The Rev. John McDonald, in the parish of Urquhart, has been, for several years, in the practice of travelling, from time to time, over some of the extensive and destitute districts of the north of Scotland, preaching as often as he had opportunity; sometimes availing himself of a friend's parlour, at other times of a dissenting chapel; but more frequently of the side of a hill, or the margin of a river. Few individuals in the church to which he belongs, have been more honoured of God, to be useful in turning sinners from darkness to light. His activity, zeal, and popularity, it would appear, however, have been very disagreeable to some of his more regular and orderly brethren. A complaint accordingly was lodged against him, for *preaching in other parishes than his own*; on which the Assembly came to a resolution, which clearly shows the divided state of the clergy of the Church of Scotland, the trammels to which her zealous ministers are obliged to submit, and how much the best interests of men are sacrificed to forms of ecclesiastical polity. With the exception of the Archdeacon of Bath's Protest, it is one of the most singular and unchristian interferences of modern times. It is, indeed, still less justifiable than his conduct; as it is the deliberate deed, not of an individual in a paroxysm of passion, but of a numerous body of men, met in solemn consultation; and delivered in the awful name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do feel devoutly thankful that we can enjoy the "liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free," without being subject to the domination of lordly Bishops, or angry Archdeacons, or of carnal temporizing Presbyterian Assemblies. We copy from

the Scots papers the judgment of the Assembly, which was carried by a considerable majority, and against which some unavailing reasons of dissent were to be given in by a few individuals who protested against it.

" Having considered the references, the Assembly declare, that the performance of divine service, or of any part of public worship, by ministers of this church, in meeting houses of dissenters, is irregular and unconstitutional, and ought on no occasion to take place, except in cases in which, from the peculiar circumstances of the parish, its minister may find it occasionally necessary for conducting the ordinary religious instruction of his people; and the Assembly further declare, that the conduct of any minister of the church, who exercises his pastoral functions in a vagrant manner, preaching during his journeys from place to place in the open air, in other parishes than his own, or officiating in any meeting for religious exercises, without the special invitation of the minister within whose parish it shall be held, and by whom such meetings shall be called, is disorderly, and unbefitting the character of a minister of this church, and calculated to weaken the hands of the minister of the parish, and to injure the interests of sound religion; and the Assembly enjoins Presbyteries to give orders that no countenance be given by ministers within their bounds to such occasional meetings proposed to be held for divine service, or other pious purposes, as may, under pretext of promoting religion, injure its interests, and so disturb the peace and order of the church; and in case such meetings take place, the Presbyteries within whose bounds they are held, are enjoined to report the same to the meeting of the General Assembly next ensuing."

*Gloucestershire Independent Benevolent Society, and Bristol Theological Institution.*  
THE Annual Meeting of the Gloucestershire Independent Benevolent Society, will be held at Bristol, on Thursday the 6th of August, 1818. There will be an open Committee to audit the accounts, on the preceding evening, between the hours of five and seven o'clock, in Castle Green Vestry.

On the same day, viz. the 6th August, the Anniversary of the Bristol Theological Institution, will be held. The first service is intended to be at Mr. Lowell's Chapel, on the preceding evening; the second at Castle Green, on Thursday morning; the third at the Tabernacle, on Thursday evening.

#### *Berkshire Association.*

THE next Meeting of the Associated

Ministers of Berkshire, will be held at the Rev. W. Wilkins's Meeting, Abingdon, on Tuesday, July 7. The Rev. Mr. Harsant, of Beaconsfield, to expound. The Rev. A. Douglas, of Reading, to preach "on the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and the claim they have to our regard." Subject for conversation after dinner, "a forgiving spirit." The Rev. G. Redford, of Uxbridge, is to preach in the evening.

#### *London Association in Aid of the Missions of the United Brethren.*

ON Sunday evening, the 26th of July next, a sermon will be preached for the benefit of this Society, at the Rev. John Clayton's meeting-house, Camomile-street, by the Rev. Dr. Waugh. Since the formation of the Society, at the close of last year,\* about 450*l.* has been raised for the Missions; of which sum 436*l.* has been paid into the hands of the Brethren's treasurer.

#### *Promotion of the Rev. S. Maddock.*

THE Rev. Samuel Maddock has been instituted into the Vicarage of Bishop Sutton, with Ropley, by the Lord Bishop of Winchester, on the presentation of the Hon. Forward Howard, and Cecil Frances his wife, and the most Noble the Marquis of Abercorn.

We understand, on good authority, that the revenue of this living is 500*l.* per annum; and that it is presented to Mr. Maddock, as a token of the generous and spontaneous sympathy of his friends, for his treatment at Long Sutton.

#### *Dreadful Earthquake.*

LETTERS have been received from Bucharest in Wallachia, dated May 17, stating, that an earthquake has destroyed the great and flourishing city of Philipopolis, in Romania. The population of that city, was generally estimated at 70,000 persons; and if the statements in the letters be correct, the city has been entirely swallowed up in the vast subterraneous abyss, and a trace of it is sought in vain.

*Death of the Bishop of Gothenburgh.*  
DIED in February last, the venerable Bishop of GOTHENBURGH, the zealous promoter of Bible Societies. Age and infirmities preventing him from continuing to preach the gospel, which he had done for half a century, he devoted the remainder of life, to the establishment and the support of the Gothenburgh Bible Society, and evinced much zeal in the distribution of the Holy Scriptures.

\* See Congregational Magazine, No. 1.  
page 53.

## LITERARY NOTICES.

The Editors will feel obliged to Literary Gentlemen and Publishers, for the communication of Notices, (Post Paid,) suited to this Department of the LONDON CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

## WORKS PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION.

The Rev. Mr. Snow has in the Press, a Reply to a Letter written by the Rev. John Simons, purporting to be on certain Errors of the Antinomian Kind, which have lately sprung up in the West of England.

The author of "The History of Dissenting Churches," having received application from different quarters to undertake a Fifth Volume of that Work, to comprise the remainder of London, takes this method of announcing, that he is willing so to do, provided sufficient subscribers are obtained to indemnify him from loss. Subscribers names received by Button and Son, Paternoster Row. Price not to exceed 1s.—Eight Copies for seven.

In the Press, and will shortly be published, The Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, maintained and demonstrated by an appeal to the Scriptures.

In July, a new edition of President Edwards's Life of David Brainerd will be published, handsomely printed in Demy Octavo.

In the Press, and speedily will be published, a Spelling, Pronouncing, and Explanatory Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, in One Volume, 12mo. in which all the words of the four leading parts of Speech, in the New Testament, are arranged under their respective Heads, and the Explanations given in as simple, clear, and concise a manner as possible.

SELECT LIST OF WORKS RECENTLY  
PUBLISHED.

Reflections concerning the Expediency of a Council of the Church of England, and the Church of Rome, being holden, with a view to accommodate religious differences, and to promote the unity of religion in the bond of peace. Humbly, but earnestly recommended to the serious attention of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, the Most Reverend the Archbishops, the Right Reverend the Bishops, the Reverend the Clergy, and all Lay Persons who are able and willing dispassionately to consider the important subject. By Samuel Wix, A. M. F. R. and A. S. Vicar of St. Bartholomew the Less, London. Price 2s. 6d.

A Second Edition of the Rev. Mark Willis's Sermon on Nonconformity. Price 2s. 6d.

Memoir of the Rev. Mr. Morris, late of Amersham, Bucks. By the Rev. S. Godwin, of Great Missenden, 12mo. Price 2s. 6d.

A Sermon, preached in Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, Edinburgh, before the Edinburgh Missionary Society, on April the 2nd, 1812. By Henry Grey, A. M. Minister of the Chapel of Ease, St. Cuthbert's. To which is added, a Report of the Directors.

Observations upon a Letter by the Rev. John Simons, Rector of St. Paul's Cray, addressed to a highly respected Friend, upon certain Errors of the Antinomian Kind, which have lately sprung up in the West of England. By a By-Stander. Price 2s. 6d.

Annals of Scottish Episcopacy, from the year 1785, to the year 1810 inclusive; being the period during which the Right Rev. John Skinner, of Aberdeen, held the office of Senior Bishop and Primus; of whom a Biographical Memoir is prefixed; by the Rev. John Skinner, A. M. 8vo. 12s. boards.

Memoirs of the Life and Character of Mrs. Savage, eldest daughter of the Rev. Philip Henry; with an appendix, by J. B. Williams, and a preface, by the Rev. W. Jay. 12mo. 5s.

Reciprocal Duties of Parents and Children; by Mrs. Taylor. 12mo. 5s.

Lectures during a Tour through some parts of France, Savoy, Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands, in the Summer of 1812. By Thomas Raffles, A. M. 12mo. 7s. boards.

An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. By Thomas Hartwell Horne, A. M. In 2 Vols. Two. Illustrated with maps, and fac-similes of Biblical Manuscripts.

The Connection of Natural and Revealed Theology; being an Attempt to illustrate the Evidence and Doctrines of Christianity, by their relation to the Inductive Philosophy of the Human Mind. By the Rev. E. W. Grindfield, Minister of Laura Chapel, Bath. 8vo. 12s. boards.

Journal of a Visit to South Africa in 1812 and 1813, with some account of the Missionary Settlements of the United Brethren, near the Cape of Good Hope. By the Rev. C. J. Latrobe, 4to. 21. 2s.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Favours have been received this Month from J. J.—Rex.—Merlin.—Imus.—Knoξ.

Rev. Messrs. Harris.—Harrison.—Thornton.—Gellibrand.—Bishop (Gloucester).—Robertaon.—Taylor (Ongar).—Vowles.—Orme.—Morell.—Lacey.—Mitchell.—Taylor (Yeovil).—Messrs. Ryley and Leach.

Reply of Mesos to Imus, on ordination, will be inserted in our next Number.

We hope to insert J. J.'s Paper, which he wishes returned.

Our Correspondents will observe, that it does not enter into our plan to insert obituaries, or even notices of deaths, except those of public characters.

Our friends in CAMBRIDGESHIRE are requested to furnish us with the Dissenting Statistics for that county as early as possible.

We are under the necessity of reminding our correspondents, that all communications for this Magazine, must be sent to the Editors, at the Publisher's; and that they must be post paid.